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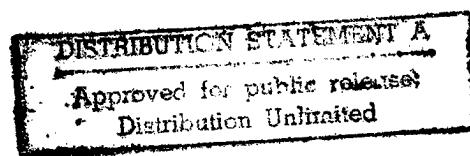
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USSR Report

MILITARY AFFAIRS

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No. 12, December 1984



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16 May 1985

**USSR REPORT
MILITARY AFFAIRS**

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No 12, December 1984

Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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MILITARY HISTORY

ARMY GEN BELOBORODOV ON EAST PRUSSIAN OPERATION

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 84 (signed to press 28 Nov 84) pp 3-12

[Article by Army Gen A. Beloborodov, twice Hero of the Soviet Union*: "Certain Characteristic Features of The East Prussian Operation"]

[Text] The East Prussian Operation (13 January-25 April 1945) was an integral part of the general strategic offensive begun by the Soviet Army in January 1945. It ended with the total defeat of the German fascist grouping in East Prussia and the northern part of Poland.

Well equipped and projecting to the east, the territory of East Prussia provided an excellent staging area for predatory campaigns. It played an enormous role in the fascist army's defensive operations. When the greatest danger arose on the main, Berlin axis, a large enemy grouping in that part of Germany menaced forces of the 1st and 2nd Belorussian fronts. A real threat was thus created to the plans of the Soviet command in the execution of crucial operations on the Berlin axis. Also important was the fact that naval bases and ports in East Prussia and on the Baltic Sea permitted the German fascist command to base extensive naval forces there and to maintain contact with divisions cut off in Courland.

Relying on a powerfully fortified defense, the fascist command intended to halt the advance of Soviet forces into the interior of East Prussia and pin them down for a long period of time. In addition, it planned to inflict a counterblow against the flank and rear of the Soviet Army's central grouping, which was operating on the Berlin axis. A powerful system of fortifications was set up in East Prussia for purposes of carrying out these plans, which included seven defensive lines and six fortified areas. The defensive system was as much as 150-200 kilometers deep. It was most highly developed with respect to engineer preparation to the north of the Masuria lake region, where there were nine fortified zones on the Gumbinnen, Konigsberg axis.

The defense was aided by the considerable number of rivers, lakes, swamps and canals and by a large number of communities in which solid, stone structures

*During the East Prussian Operation Lt. Gen. Afanasiy Pavlant'yevich Beloborodov commanded the 1st Baltic Front's 43rd Army.

predominated. Colonel General A.P. Pokrovskiy, former chief of staff of the 3rd Belorussian Front, noted that "the Hitlerites had managed to set up several modern fortified regions in advance.... Nor were the old fortresses forgotten, and they were modernized to a significant degree. All of this taken together made East Prussia one vast fortified region."¹

The defense of East Prussia and northern Poland was assigned to Army Group Center (Army Group North from 26 January 1945), which included the 3rd Tank Army, the 4th and 2nd Armies and had a total of 780,000 soldiers and officers (including 200,000 people's storm troopers). The enemy had 8,200 guns and mortars (not counting antiaircraft and rocket artillery), 700 tanks and assault guns, and 775 combat aircraft there.² In addition, the Hitlerite command was counting greatly on assistance from its fleet operating in the Baltic.

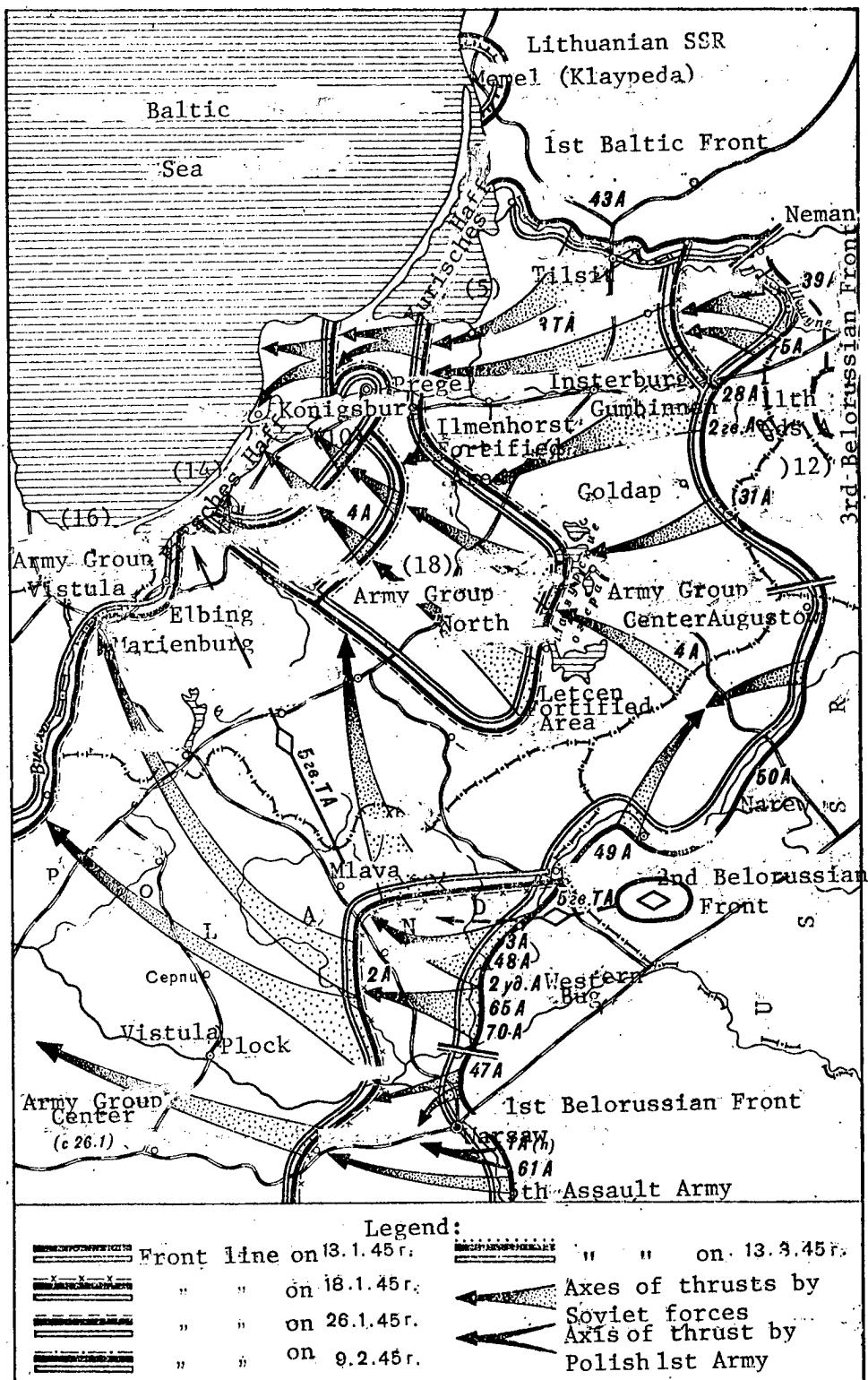
When it worked out the plan for the 1945 campaign in Europe, Headquarters, Supreme High Command, regarded the elimination of the East Prussian staging area and the liberation of Poland's northern regions to be one of its most important military-political objectives. Forces of the 2nd and 3rd Belorussian Fronts, as well as the 1st Baltic Front's 43rd Army, were ordered to carry out the East Prussian Operation, in the course of which they were to cut off Army Group Center from the remaining Wehrmacht Forces, press it to the sea, split it up and destroy it piecemeal, interacting with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. The achievement of this objective was also served by the offensive conducted by Soviet forces on the Berlin axis (See Diagram page 3).

Headquarters, Supreme High Command, defined the following missions for the fronts on the basis of this plan:

The 3rd Belorussian Front³ (Army General I.D. Chernyakhovskiy, commander; Lieutenant General V.Ye. Makarov, military council member; Colonel General A.P. Pokrovskiy, chief of staff) was to route the enemy's Tilsit-Insterburg grouping, capture a line running from Nemonien through Norkitten to Goldap (70-80 kilometers in depth) on the 10th-12th days, and subsequently, after solidly securing the front's main grouping on the south, to develop an offensive toward Konigsberg on both banks of the Pregel River, with the main forces on its southern bank.

Our 43rd Army had the mission of making an auxiliary strike against Tilsit, and in case it succeeded, of swiftly pursuing the withdrawing enemy forces along the shore of Kurisches Haff Bay and preventing them from fortifying themselves on the northern part of the Zemland Peninsula at prepared positions on the Dayma River and near the city of Kranz.

The 2nd Belorussian Front⁴ (Marshall of the Soviet Union K.K. Rokossovskiy, commander; Lieutenant General N.Ye. Subbotin, military council member; and Lieutenant General--Colonel General from 17 February 1945--A.N. Bogolyubov, chief of staff) was to route the enemy's Przasnysz Mlawa and no later than the 10th or 11th day of the offensive, to capture a line running from (Myshinets) through Dzialdovo to Plock (85-90 kilometers in depth) and then to advance in the general direction of Marienburg. To assist the 1st Belorussian Front in the routing of the enemy's Warsaw grouping, the front was assigned the mission of making a thrust around Modlin from the west with part of the forces from the left wing.



East Prussian Offensive Operation of 13 January–25 April 1945

The mission of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (Admiral V.F. Tributs, commander; Vice Admiral N.K. Smirnov, military council member; and Rear Admiral A.N. Petrov, chief of staff) was to sever the enemy's naval lines of communication from the Gulf of Riga to Pomeranian Bay and prevent the enemy troops from receiving supplies and their evacuation from Courland and East Prussia. When the Soviet forces reached the coast, the fleet was to assist them with its artillery and landing forces and to cover their costal flank.

In all, the Soviet grouping of forces included 14 combined arms armies, a tank army and two air armies, four tank corps, a separate mechanized corps and a separate cavalry corps, and numbered 1,669,000 men. We had more than a 3-fold superiority over the enemy in guns and mortars (not including antiaircraft or rocket artillery). We surpassed the Hitlerites 5.5-fold in tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces, and 4-fold in combat aircraft.⁵

The East Prussian Operation was preceeded by thorough, all-around preparations. They included an enormous amount of work in the planning of the forthcoming combat operations and the regrouping of forces, intensive combat training for the personnel of units and formations for breaking through the enemy's powerful, deeply echeloned defense. The staffs used such well proved forms of preparation as assemblies of command personnel, command and staff games on maps, and took into account the actual situation which had developed in the fronts' zone to persistently perfect and strengthen their skills in organizing interaction and maintaining firm control on the battlefield. Personnel of the units and formations were trained day and night on training fields outfitted with a system of defense installations like those of the enemy's defense, and on terrain similar to that on which they would be operating.

The East Prussian Operation began on 13 January 1945 with a switch to an offensive by forces of the 3rd Belorussian Front. The forward battalions were the first to engage the enemy in battle. They did so at 0600. Bursting onto the forward edge, they learned that the enemy, foreseeing possible operations by the Soviet forces, had left only insignificant forces in the first trench and withdrawn the main forces to the second and third trenches. Changes were therefore made in the plan of artillery preparations for the attack, which lasted from 0900 to 1100. Fierce and determined battles broke out on the Gumbinnen axis, where the main thrust was made. Overcoming the enemy's fire resistance and repelling constant enemy counterattacks, the Soviet forces steadily advanced.

The routing of the enemy in the zone between Tilsit and Insterburg made it possible for our forces to develop the offense toward Konigsberg, while the thrusts at the center of the front's offensive forced the Hitlerites to begin withdrawing from the Masuria lake region. During the last days of January, forces of the 3rd Belorussian Front penetrated the northern side of the Heilsberg fortified area from the march and had reached Frisches Haff lagoon, to the west and south of Konigsberg, by the end of the month. The withdrawing fascist grouping was split into two isolated groups: Zemland and Konigsberg. During that same period our 43rd Army captured the city of Tilsit. After that it became a part of the 3rd Belorussian Front. Another important event had also occurred. Forces of the 1st Baltic Front had liberated Memel (Klaypeda), after completely driving the enemy out of Lithuania.

The offensive by forces of the 2nd Belorussian Front was begun on the morning of 14 January, when front assault groupings switched to an attack with the main forces from the Ruzan and Seroc staging areas, following powerful artillery preparation. In 3 days of determined battle, they broke through the tactical zone of the enemy's defense on a 60-kilometer sector and advanced as far as 30 kilometers into the depth, capturing the important strongpoints of Pultusk and Naselsk. Our aviation began operating on 16 January. The fog had dissipated, the weather had improved, and pilots of the 4th Air Army (Colonel General of Aviation K.A. Vershinin, commander) carried out massed ground-attack and bombing strikes against the German fascist troops, making 2,516 sorties in the process.⁶ In order to break the enemy's resistance once and for all, tank and mechanized formations were introduced into the battle, followed by the 5th Guards Tank Army of Colonel General of Tank Troops V.T. Vol'skiy. Their successful operations created conditions conducive to the development of the offensive by the combined-arms armies. Soviet troops liberated Mlava on 19 January and subsequently crossed the German border and captured the important junction of Allenstein, cutting off East Prussia's main railway artery.

The threat of encirclement hung over formations of the Hitlerite 4th Army. They successfully abandoned the Augustow salient and the Letcensk fortified area and attempted to break through to the west. They did not succeed, however.

The offensive by the 2nd Belorussian Front subsequently developed more successfully. The separation of the East Prussian grouping--the 3rd Tank Army and the 4th Army, several infantry and motorized divisions, and other formations which were a part of the 2nd Army--from the other Wehrmacht forces was completed on 26 January.

By the end of January 1945, the German fascist forces in East Prussia had been split up into three isolated groupings: Zemland, Konigsberg and Heilsberg. Headquarters, Supreme High Command, assigned the mission of destroying them to the 3rd Belorussian Front and the 1st Baltic Front. The 2nd Belorussian Front was to operate to the west of the Vistula, in East Pomerania.

The Heilsberg grouping was the largest and most powerful (around 25 divisions), and the main efforts of the 3rd Belorussian Front therefore focused on destroying it. The battles on that axis were very determined ones. The enemy resisted with the desperation of the doomed. Our units and formations moved steadily forward, however. In the very heat of the battle, on 18 February 1945, twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Army General Ivan Danilovich Chernyakhovskiy, commander of the 3rd Belorussian Front, was mortally wounded by a fragment from an enemy shell on the outskirts of the city of Molsack. Marshall of the Soviet Union A.M. Vasilevskiy assumed command of the front. I.D. Chernyakhovskiy's death was acutely felt in the hearts of the Soviet fightingmen. During those sorrowful days, each of them considered it his duty to avenge the death of the outstanding military chief, to battle the hated enemy with even greater fury. The Heilsberg grouping had been destroyed by the end of March.

The same fate awaited the enemy's Konigsberg grouping. Konigsberg was a fortress-city whose territory the Hitlerites had turned into a complex system of various types of permanent fortifications. The broken terrain and naturally, the garrison itself, which numbered around 130,000 soldiers and officers and contained up

to 4,000 guns and mortars, 108 tanks and assault guns, contributed to the strength of the enemy's defense. In addition, the 5th Tank Division was deployed west of the city. It was helping with the city's defense, and the Konigsberg grouping was supported from the air by 170 aircraft based at air-fields on the Zemland Peninsula.⁷ Ships of the enemy's fleet also provided fire support for the garrison.

The Soviet command was well aware of the difficulties involved in the forthcoming assault and prepared for it thoroughly. The difficult mission was to be carried out by forces of the 3rd Belorussian Front, which included also the Zemland group of forces (Army General I.Kh. Bagramyan, commander; Lieutenant General M.V. Rudakov, military council member; and Colonel General V.V. Kurasov, chief of staff), which had been formed out of the 1st Baltic Front on 25 February 1945. It consisted in routing the Konigsberg garrison with powerful attacks from the north by forces of the 39th, 43rd and 50th armies and from the south, by forces of the 11th Guards Army, and capturing the city by the end of the third day of the operation. The 2nd Guards Army and the 5th Army were to simultaneously cut off the Zemland grouping of Hitlerites to secure front forces against possible enemy attacks from the northwest. The assault on the fortress began on 6 April 1945. The attacking troops advanced, capturing or blockading forts, crossing trenches and anti-tank ditches, and destroying the defenders. The Hitlerites fought with the desperation of condemned men, but were unable to hold out. The onslaught of the Soviet forces and the avalanche of steel and fire broke them. Soviet aviation, which carried out almost 14,000 sorties in 4 days, played an enormous role.⁸ The Konigsberg garrison surrendered on the evening of 9 April. That same day gratitude was expressed in an order issued by the Supreme High Command to the forces which had taken part in the storming of this citadel, one of the most powerful in East Prussia. Moscow marked the feat performed by the heroes with a festive salute. The medal "For the Taking of Konigsberg" was established in honor of the remarkable event by an ukase issued by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 9 June 1945.

Soon thereafter, forces of the 3rd Belorussian Front, interacting with the Baltic Fleet, began an offensive against the Zemland enemy grouping, completing it on 25 April with a route which resounded as the powerful finale of the East Prussian Offensive Operation.

And so, the operation, which lasted 103 days, ended in a total route for the powerful strategic enemy grouping, the elimination of the East Prussian staging area and the liberation of the northern part of Poland. More than 25 enemy divisions were totally destroyed during the operation, and 12 divisions lost 50 to 75 percent of their personnel. Good conditions had been created for routing the enemy's East German grouping.

Soviet military art underwent further development in the East Prussian Strategic Operation. Experience was acquired in the planning, organization and conduct of an operation by a group of fronts, a fleet and large air forces on a coastal axis. It was also an instructive example of the correct determination by Headquarters, Supreme High Command, of the axes for the main thrust of the fronts, allocation of the proper personnel and equipment, and organization of precise interaction among fronts attacking on independent, widely separated axes. In addition, it was necessary not only to form large assault groupings

of fronts, but also to allocate the personnel and equipment to secure their flanks (the 1st Baltic Front's 43rd Army and the 1st Belorussian Front's 47th Army) against likely attack from the north and south.

Taking into account the powerful fortifications at the enemy's forward edge, the front commanders concentrated their personnel and equipment on narrow breakthrough sectors--14 percent of the total width of the offensive zone for the 3rd Belorussian Front and around 10 percent for the 2nd Belorussian Front. The regroupings of forces and their bold massing resulted in around 60 percent of the rifle formations, 77-80 percent of the guns and mortars, and 80-89 percent of the tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces being concentrated on the breakthrough sectors.⁹ This made it possible, with a triple superiority over the enemy in personnel and equipment, to create a 5- to 9-fold superiority on the axes of the main thrusts and to have 160-220 guns and mortars, more than 50 tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces and 30 tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces for direct support of the enemy on 1 kilometer of breakthrough sector in the 3rd Belorussian Front, and 180-300 guns and mortars, 70 tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces, and 20-25 tanks and self-propelled pieces for direct support of the infantry in the 2nd Belorussian Front. In the specific situation these were the optimal densities and greatly assisted the breakthrough of the enemy's defense.

The deep formation of the forces also facilitated the plan for in-depth strikes by the fronts and the building-up of the strikes when overcoming a powerfully fortified and densely occupied enemy defense. The 3rd Belorussian Front had one combined-arms army and two tank corps in its second echelon and mobile groups for building up the effort, and the 2nd Belorussian Front had one tank army, two tank corps, a mechanized corps and a cavalry corps. The tactical order of battle for most of the armies was in one echelon, with a rifle division in reserve. The 2nd Assault Army and the 70th Army had a two-echelon arrangement, and the tactical order of battle for the 49th Army was in three echelons. The expediency of this organization was due to the fact that they were assigned the mission of expanding the breakthrough toward the flanks and supporting the flanks of the assault groupings. As a rule, the top battle orders of the formations and units consisted of two echelons, less frequently--of three. This made it possible to have the necessary personnel and equipment, especially artillery and tanks, on the breakthrough sectors, and to build-up the thrusts into the depth and toward the flanks. Despite our superiority in forces, however, we did not succeed in making a powerful initial thrust against the enemy. In the situation of determined enemy resistance and inclement weather (aircraft were not operating, artillery fire was little effective, and the operations of the tank troops, especially the tanks for direct support of the infantry, were limited), the breakthrough of the tactical defense zone was dragged out. It was breached on the 2nd or 3rd day of the operation in the 2nd Belorussian Front, for example, and on the 5th or 6th day in the 3rd Belorussian Front. Reserves and the mobile groups of the armies had to be drawn upon for completing the breakthrough, and the mobile group as well for the 3rd Belorussian Front. And only the enemy's use of its reserves in the battle for the tactical defense zone made it possible for the fronts subsequently to advance more rapidly. They encircled and broke up the East Prussian grouping and completed their missions on the 13th-18th days. The decision by the commander of the 3rd Belorussian Front to commit

the second echelon (11th Guards Army) not according to the initial plan, but in the zone of the 39th Army, where the greatest success had taken shape, also played a positive role. The continuous nature of the combat operations, achieved by specially training the subunits and units to conduct them at night, also contributed to the rapid rate of the offensive. For example, after the 11th Guards Army was committed to the engagement, it battled its way a distance of 110 kilometers to Konigsberg, 60 of them at night.¹¹

The fact that our forces spent a great deal of time destroying encircled enemy groupings was one of the specific features of that operation. While the Heilsberg grouping was eliminated by systematically destroying the personnel at strongpoints and gradually pressing the remainder more and more tightly against the shore of the lagoon, the enemy at Konigsberg was routed with a swift assault on the encircled fortress. In the former case the operation lasted over one and a half months and entailed significant losses. The second operation, which was set up in a planned manner and supported by extensive air and artillery forces, was completed within a period of 4 days and nights. The fact that the Hitlerite forces were defending in fortified areas, in difficult terrain and in weather conditions which did not favor the offensive was another negative factor. Although the enemy was isolated on land, it was not solidly blockaded by our fleet from the sea. As a result, it constantly received ammunition, fuel and other supplies from Germany.

Artillery was highly important in the East Prussian Operation. It was used in concentrations in all sections. A characteristic feature of the army artillery groups was the fact that they included mainly long-range artillery. The plan for artillery preparation for the offensive was based on the need to breakthrough a powerfully fortified enemy defense in three periods. This accounts for both the densities previously mentioned and the considerable amount of time allocated for artillery preparation, and for certain other special features. Artillery preparation lasted 2 hours for the 3rd Belorussian Front, for example. During that period it was necessary to suppress the enemy's defense system to a depth of 6 kilometers. It was planned to support the attack by infantry and tanks by sequentially concentrating fire to a depth of 1.5-1.8 kilometers. In the 2nd Belorussian Front, 1 hour and 25 minutes was allotted for artillery preparation. It was planned to support the attack by infantry and tanks with a double barrage of fire to a depth of up to 2 kilometers.¹²

Support for the infantry and tanks when fighting in the enemy's defensive depth in both fronts was provided in the form of successive concentration of fire. Artillery support for introducing mobile formations into the breach, on the other hand, was to be provided by the artillery of those combined-arms armies in whose zones the breakthrough was planned.

I would like to direct attention to one other element--direct use of the artillery in street fighting in large centers of population. Under those conditions, it frequently had to fire by direct laying. Our 43rd Army already had a certain amount of experience in this. As we prepared for the East Prussian Offensive Operation, we attempted to make it available to all. Specifically, the method of firing by direct laying not with a single gun, but with two, was extensively publicized and studied in the units and formations. It was essentially the following. The crew of one gun would open fire, while the crew of another,

located somewhat to the rear, would perform surveillance in a state of readiness to suppress any enemy fire point which unexpectedly became active. The very movement of the guns in the infantry's battle orders was carried out in sequence, in a leap-frog manner, which provided for continuous firing at the enemy. This method, a product of the initiative of individual commanders became widespread, as, incidentally, did many other new things. It came in very handy to both us and our neighbors in the battles fought for East Prussia.

A specific feature of the use of tank formations in the operation was the fact that they were unable to separate themselves from the combined-arms armies by any significant distance during the period of pursuit, as was done in the Belorussian, Wisla-Oder and other operations of the last war, for example. This was due to the peculiarity of the area of combat operations, the existance of a system of defensive lines developed to the entire operational depth, and the enemy's extensive employment of tank ambushes in woods, groves and centers of population.

Our command attached great importance to the use of aircraft, as it always has. Suffice it to say that there was a total of 3,097 combat aircraft in the air armies of both fronts.¹³ In addition, aircraft of the 1st Baltic Front and part of the Baltic Fleet's long-range aircraft (the 18th Air Army) were used when the enemy was being destroyed on the approaches to Konigsberg and on the Zemland Peninsula. Taking advantage of the slightest improvement in the weather, they made around 146,000 sorties during the operation.¹⁴ In view of the fact that their employment in the offensive operation had to do with breaching a defense consisting of fortified areas, the operations of the air forces were planned in detail for the first 3-4 days of the operation. They were to make 22,598 sorties for both fronts.¹⁵

Along with taking an active part in the operation to break through fortified areas, the aviation also operated successfully in the assault on the Konigsberg fortress. It performed more than 14,000 sorties in a 4-day period, and considerable air forces were drawn upon in the battle for Konigsberg. The attacks were made by air formations of five air armies under the overall direction of the commander of the Air Forces of the Soviet Army--a total of around 2,400 aircraft. Various techniques were used for conducting combat operations in the assault, depending upon the specific situation and the time. Massed strikes were ordinarily made at the beginning of an assault. On the second day of the battle for the city, for example, the 18th Air Army carried out a massed strike in which more than 500 heavy bombers operated for a period of 45 minutes.

The engineer troops of both fronts and of our 43rd Army performed an enormous amount of work in support of the forthcoming operation. They equipped the troop concentration areas and the starting areas for the assault groupings, created the necessary conditions for breaking through highly fortified, permanent-type zones, equipped the routes for committing second echelons and mobile formations to the engagement, built dozens of bridges over water barriers and performed continuous engineer reconnaissance. A specially formed, powerful and technically equipped grouping of engineer troops performed those missions. The command element of the 3rd Belorussian Front assigned around 55 combat engineer, ponton bridging, tank engineer and special battalions, and the 2nd Belorussian Front

assigned around 77 such battalions to reinforce formations operating on the main axes. Together with the troop engineer subunits and units and the army brigades, this made it possible to create a density of 14 engineer companies on 1 kilometer of the breakthrough sector in the 3rd Belorussian Front and 17.7 in the 2nd Belorussian Front.¹⁶ A month before the beginning of the offensive, classes were conducted in specially created centers to train the combat engineers to operate within assault groups. Because there were many hydraulic engineering works in East Prussia, making it possible to flood the area, special hydraulic engineering subunits capable of servicing those works were prepared in five army and three assault combat engineer brigades in the 3rd Belorussian Front.

The ground forces received considerable assistance from the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. In the difficult basing conditions and the mine situation, the fleet's aircraft, surface ships and submarines operated actively on the enemy's naval lines of communication in the Baltic Sea, disrupting its transport operations. The fleet assisted the offensive by ground forces on the coastal axis with bombing and ground-attack strikes by aircraft, with artillery fire from motor gun-boats and railway batteries, and by putting tactical landing groups ashore. The Baltic Fleet did not succeed in totally blockading the enemy groupings pressed to the sea, however, because it did not have the necessary seaborne forces.

The military councils, political organs, party and Komsomol organizations performed an enormous amount of work during the period of preparations for the offensive. Using the most diverse forms and methods of affecting the minds and hearts of the fightingmen, they developed in the personnel a burning hatred for the enemy, a high level of aggressive enthusiasm and an unshakable faith that victory would be achieved.

Great importance was attached to the strengthening of party organizations by accepting the best fightingmen into the party and establishing party and Komsomol organizations in the companies, batteries and equivalent subunits. Thousands of fightingmen joined the Communist Party during the East Prussian Operation, writing in their requests the following words dictated by their hearts: "I want to enter into battle as a communist"! More than 425,000 communists were fighting in the forces of the 3rd and 2nd Belorussian Fronts as of 1 January 1945. Like the Komsomol members (more than 243,000),¹⁷ they provided reliable support for the commanders and political organs in the accomplishment of the missions facing them, and constituted the force which united and solidified the army formation and instilled courage and fearlessness in the personnel.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government properly appreciated the skill, heroism and valor of the Soviet troops who fought in East Prussia. Moscow paid homage to their victories 28 times. More than 1,000 units and formations, including the French "Normandy-Neman" Air Regiment, were awarded orders, and 217 were given honorary names in memory of the cities they had taken. The medal "For the Taking of Konigsberg" was awarded to hundreds of thousands of fighting-men.

The East Prussian Operation made an important contribution to the development of Soviet military art. Its lessons and the specific features of preparations for and the conduct of that operation are still important in the contemporary situation.

FOOTNOTES

1. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL No 2, p 31.
2. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II, 1939-1945], Moscow, Vol 10, Voyenizdat, 1979, p 92.
3. It included the 2nd and 11th Guards Armies, the 31st, 39th, 5th and 28th Armies, the 1st and 2nd Guards Tank Corps and the 1st Air Army.
4. The front consisted of the 2nd Assault Army, the 50th, 49th, 3rd, 48th, 65th and 70th Armies, the 5th Guards Tank Army, the 8th Mechanized Corps, the 8th and 1st Guards Tank Corps, the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps and the 4th Air Army.
5. "Istoriya..." op. cit., p 92.
6. Ibid., p 102.
7. Ibid., p 117.
8. "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna. Kratkaya istoriya" [World War II: A Brief History], Moscow, Nauka, 1984, p 501.
9. "Istoriya..." op. cit., p 94.
10. "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynie 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, Vol 4, 1959, p 89.
11. "Istoriya..." op. cit., p 125.
12. "Operatsii..." op. cit., Vol 4, p 45; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 3, 1970, pp 114-116.
13. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1965, p 82.
14. "Istoriya..." op. cit., p 125.
15. "Operatsii..." op. cit., p 48.
16. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1975, p 79.
17. "Istoriya..." op. cit., p 98.

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MILITARY HISTORY

COL GEN SNETKOV ON OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN KARELIA

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 84 (signed to press 28 Nov 84) pp 13-18

[Article by Col Gen B. Snetkov, commander of the Red Banner Leningrad Military District: "Offensive Operations by Soviet Forces on the Karelian Isthmus and in Southern Karelia"]

[Text] The extensive successes achieved by the Soviet Army made it possible to begin the summer-fall campaign of 1944 with an offensive by the Leningrad and Karelian Fronts on the Karelian Isthmus and in South Karelia. Its objectives were the following: to liberate the territory of the Karelo-Finnish SSR and the northeastern part of Leningrad Oblast from the enemy, to restore the state border on the Karelian Isthmus and to take Finland, whose government had rejected the just Soviet terms for peace and was continuing the war against the USSR, out of the war. In addition, that offensive was to divert the attention of the German fascist command away from the main thrust being delivered in Belorussia and make it possible to renew traffic on the Kirov Railway and the Belomorsk-Baltic Canal.

Enemy forces, which had been halted back in the fall of 1941 on a line running from Oshta through Lodeynoye Pole and Tappari to Beloostrov (see diagram [graphics not reproduced]), had set up a powerful, deeply echeloned defense. Six defensive zones up to 180 kilometers in depth had been created before the Karelian Front. They were occupied by the Maselskaya (the 2nd Army Corps, the 14th Infantry Division and the Onega Coastal Defense Brigade) and the Olonets (5th and 6th Army Corps and the Ladoga Coastal Defense Brigade) operational groups of Finnish forces in June of 1944. The enemy's defense before the Leningrad Front included three zones and the Vyborg defensive perimeter (total depth, 120 kilometers). They were occupied by the German 3rd and 4th Army Corps, which consisted of six divisions and four brigades.

A trench system, permanent earthen firepoints, shelters, dug-outs and individual, permanent reinforced concrete structures formed the basis of the engineer organization of the defensive zones. Strongpoints had from two to five trenches connected by communication trenches every 150-200 meters. The entire length of the forward edge was covered by a dense network of anti-tank and anti-personnel barriers and mine fields.

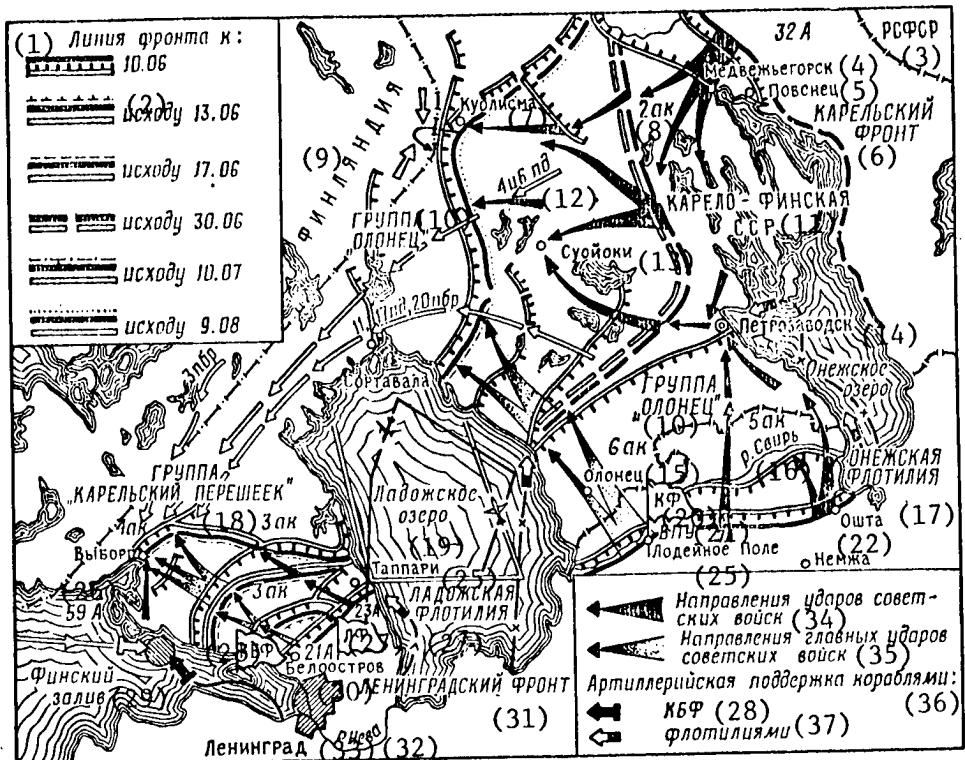
The plan of the Soviet Supreme High Command called for conducting the Vyborg offensive operation from 10 to 20 June 1944. Its objective was the following: Forces of the right wing of the Leningrad Front (Army General L.A. Govorov, commander), interacting with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (Admiral V.F. Tributs, commander) and the Ladoga Military Flotilla (Rear Admiral V.S. Cherokov, commander), was to make the main thrust in the direction of Beloostrov and Vyborg, and to capture Vyborg on the 9th or 10th day of the operation. It was then planned to carry out the Svirsk-Petrozavodsk offensive operation from 21 June to 9 August, without a pause in operations. In that operation forces of the left wing of the Karelian Front (Army General K.A. Meretskov, commander), interacting with the Ladoga and Onega Military Flotillas (Captain 1st Rank N.V. Antonov, commander of the latter), was to route the grouping of Finnish forces in the area between lakes Onega and Ladoga in South Karelia with thrusts from two directions. The main thrust was made by the 7th Army (Lieutenant General A.N. Krutikov, commander) in the direction of Olonets and Sortavala. The 32nd Army (Lieutenant General F.D. Gorelenko, commander) was to advance toward Suoyerari, and part of the forces were to advance toward Petrozavodsk.

Before the offensive began, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet was to move five rifle divisions of the 21st Army over the Gulf of Finland from Oraniyenbaum to an area north of Leningrad, and when the offensive began, to demolish the enemy's centers of resistance in the coastal zone, destroy and suppress its artillery batteries, feign a landing of forces on the flanks of the enemy's defensive lines in order to draw off its forces to defend the coastal area, to reconnoiter the enemy's naval forces and destroy its combat ships and transport equipment. The Ladoga and Onega Military Flotillas were ordered to assist the 23rd and 7th Armies respectively in a breakthrough of the enemy's defense and development of the offensive into the depth, with shipboard artillery and with actions simulating a landing operation.

The air forces of the fronts and the Baltic Fleet were assigned the following missions: aerial reconnaissance, providing cover for the regrouping and concentration of forces in the starting position, supporting the troops breaching the defense and their actions in the depth, and preventing enemy reserves from approaching the front line by land or sea.

The breakthrough of the deeply echeloned defense and the conduct of combat operations in the difficult conditions of woods and swamps made it necessary to achieve essential superiority over the enemy and to make thorough and careful preparations. Preparations for the operation on the Karelian Isthmus and in South Karelia were therefore begun in advance, during the Soviet Army's offensive near Leningrad and Novgorod in the winter of 1944. First of all, a significant regrouping of forces was effected. Headquarters, Supreme High Command, transferred the 21st Army (Lieutenant General D.N. Gusev, commander), the 3rd Breakthrough Artillery Corps (Major General of Artillery N.N. Zhdanov, commander), two rifle divisions and other formations and units from its reserve, and the 110th Rifle Corps (Major General A.S. Gryaznov, commander) from the 3rd Baltic Front, to the Leningrad Front.

On 25 February the 7th Separate Army (Lieutenant General A.N. Krutikov, commander) became a part of the Karelian Front but remained in its zone, as did the 37th Guards Rifle Corps and the 99th and 94th Rifle Corps (Lieutenant General P.V. Mirnov and Major Generals S.P. Mikul'skiy and I.I. Popov - respective commanders).



Key:

1. Front line as of	19. Lake Ladoga
2. End of	20. Front commander
3. RSFSR	21. Auxiliary control post
4. Medvezhegorsk	22. Oshta
5. Povenets	23. Nemzha
6. Karelian Front	24. Lodeynoye Pole
7. Kuolisma	25. Tappari
8. Artillery Corps	26. Vyborg
9. Finland	27. Ladoga Flotilla
10. Olenets Group	28. Red Banner Baltic Fleet
11. Karelo-Finnish SSR	29. Gulf of Finland
12. Tank destroyer battalion of infantry division?	30. Beloostrov
13. Suoyoki	31. Leningrad Front
14. Petrozavodsk	32. Neva
15. Olonets	33. Leningrad
16. Svir River	34. Axes of thrusts by Soviet forces
17. Onega Flotilla	35. Axes of main thrusts by Soviet forces
18. Karelian Isthmus Group	36. Artillery support from ships flotillas

The reinforcement of the fronts produced an overall superiority over the enemy: 1.7-fold in personnel, 5.2-fold in guns and mortars, 7.3-fold in tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces, and 6.2-fold in aircraft.¹ This made it possible to achieve high densities of forces on the breakthrough sectors. A total of 75 percent of the rifle units, 80 percent of the artillery and 100 percent of the aircraft were concentrated on the 21st Army's 18-kilometer zone on the axis of the Leningrad Front's main thrust, for example. It was planned to effect the breach in the enemy's defense on a 12.5-kilometer front, where there were as many as 170-200 guns and mortars for each kilometer. A total of 70 percent of the rifle formations, 83 percent of the artillery and all of the aircraft were concentrated in the 7th Army's zone of advance on the axis of the main thrust by the Karelian Front. Artillery density was 132-150 guns and mortars per kilometer on the 12-kilometer breakthrough sector.

The creative approach taken by the front and army command elements in putting together various military formations for accomplishing the assigned missions, taking into account the nature of the enemy's defense and the terrain, is worthy of attention. Assault battalions (or detachments) and groups for blockading and demolishing permanent installations, obstacle clearing parties, tank destroyer detachments, and artillery groups with various compositions and purposes were formed in the formations and units. The forward detachments of formations in the first echelon were assigned an important role in the development of the offensive and pursuit of the enemy.

The command element of the fronts and armies organized purposeful preparation of the troops for breaking through a fortified defense. Methods of capturing and destroying permanent installations were practiced, and the operating tactics of assault detachments and groups were improved in a specially outfitted area. There were battalion and regimental exercises with field firing, command-staff exercises in the field at the army-corps-division level.

Sailors in the Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga and Onega Military Flotillas, and pilots in the 13th and 7th Air Armies also prepared thoroughly to carry out the assigned missions. Their operations were precisely coordinated with the offensive by the land groupings.

Extensive political work was performed during the period of preparations for the operation. It focused on improving the morale and the fighting spirit of the troops and producing a great outpouring of aggressiveness in the fightingmen. The numerical strength of party organizations in the formations of fronts participating in the operations was increased to 130,000 members, which made it possible to exert active party influence in each unit and each subunit.²

The Vyborg offensive operation was preceded by preliminary air and artillery preparation, carried out on 9 June for purposes of destroying the enemy's strongest installations and for performing reconnaissance in force along the entire front. The continuous fire preparation, which lasted 10 hours, resulted in the destruction of 176 of the 189 targets designated for destruction.³

On the day following the artillery preparation, which lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes, forces of the 21st Army began a successful offensive. By the end of the day, they had advanced to a depth of up to 14 kilometers on the Vyborg axis.

The 23rd Army (Lieutenant General A.I. Cherepanov, commander) switched to an offensive on the second day of the operation. As a result of the timely build-up of the effort, front forces penetrated 24 kilometers into the enemy's defense and expanded the breach to 40 kilometers. By the end of 13 June they had completed the breakthrough of the first defensive zone and arrived at the second, which the enemy had succeeded in occupying with the withdrawing forces and with tactical reserves. The command element of the Leningrad Front skillfully maneuvered personnel and equipment during the offensive, and at the crucial moment it switched the main effort to the coastal sector, where the greatest success had taken shape.

The regrouping had been completed by the morning of 14 June, the second echelons of the rifle corps had been committed to the battle, and forces of the 21st and 23rd Armies began an assault on the enemy's second defensive zone, following fire preparation. This was the most solidly fortified zone, filled with permanent weapon implacements and with a developed system of anti-tank and anti-personnel obstacles. Forces of the Leningrad Front completed the breakthrough of this zone in the course of determined fighting which lasted from 14 to 17 June. The success was achieved by the timely commitment of reserves to the battle, by skillful interaction among all the branches of troops, and by the massed employment of artillery on the breakthrough sectors. Aircraft and ships of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga Military Flotilla operated aggressively.

During the Vyborg operation, forces of the 59th Army (Lieutenant General I.T. Korovnikov commander) were transferred to the Karelian Isthmus. From 4 to 6 July, interacting closely with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, they captured the main islands in Vyborg Bay and began preparing to land a group in the rear of the fascist forces.

On the morning of 18 June, forces of the 21st and 28th Armies began an attack on the third defensive zone. The enemy offered stiff resistance and attempted to halt the advance of Soviet forces. It progressed inexorably, however. The front forces skillfully built up the force of the thrusts, blockaded and then destroyed powerful centers of resistance, and had basically completed the breakthrough of the enemy's third defensive zone by the end of 19 June. The next day, following fierce fighting, they captured Vyborg.

The enemy offered ever increasing resistance following the capture of Vyborg. As many as three-fourths of the Finnish army was operating on the Karelian Isthmus during the first ten days of July. Its forces occupied a line abounding in water barriers. The enemy had set up a solid defense in narrow defiles ranging from 300 meters up to 3 kilometers. Foreseeing unjustifiable losses, Headquarters, Supreme High Command, therefore ordered the Leningrad Front to switch to a defense on 12 July at the lines it had reached.

The offensive by our forces moved the front line more than 150 kilometers to the northwest from Leningrad. The successful execution of the Vyborg offensive operation contributed to the subsequent rout of the aggressor in South Karelia.

The Karelian Front's Svirsk-Petrozavodsk offensive operation was conducted by forces of the 7th and 32nd Armies. Soviet forces began the offensive on 21 June,

following powerful artillery preparation. Seventh Army formations forced the Svir' River on the 1st day and captured a bridgehead up to 16 kilometers on the front and 8 kilometers in depth.⁴ That same day, the 32nd Army advanced 14-16 kilometers on the Medvezhyegorsk axis, overcoming resistance by the enemy's rear-guard forces over the entire 70-kilometer zone of advance. The enemy stepped up the resistance, mined or destroyed roads, set up ambushes and various obstacles. In that situation, Headquarters, Supreme High Command, defined the front's missions more specifically and demanded that bypassing operations be used more boldly without reducing the pace of the advance.

Developing the offensive, forces of the 32nd Army captured the Medvezhyegorsk fortified area on 23 June. With coordinated thrusts by two rifle corps (the 4th Rifle Corps and the 37th Guards Rifle Corps) and forces which had been landed--the 3rd and 70th Separate Naval Rifle Brigades--forces of the 7th Army captured the Olonets fortified area. Forced to flee, the enemy abandoned the city of Olonets. Petrozavodsk, capital of the Karelo-Finnish SSR, was liberated on 28 June.

After breaching the enemy's second defensive zone, forces of the 7th and 32nd Armies began pursuing the enemy on a broad front. This had to be done in extremely difficult terrain conditions and in isolated directions. The enemy mined sections of roads and bridges, and clung to prepared lines in defiles between the lakes and centers of resistance in populated areas. In that situation, the forward detachments of the formations were successfully used, bypassing operations were carried out in roadless areas, and strikes were made at flanks and the rear.

During the operation forces of the 7th and 32nd Armies advanced 110-250 kilometers in the depth and reached the state border on individual sectors. The assigned mission had basically been accomplished by 9 August.

As a whole, the operations carried out by Soviet forces on the Karelian Isthmus and in South Karelia altered the situation on the entire northern sector of the Soviet-German front. The offensive by forces of the Leningrad and Karelian Fronts resulted in the total elimination of the threat to Leningrad from the north and northwest, the liberation of a considerable part of the territory of the Karelo-Finnish SSR, and the restoration of traffic on the Kirov Railway and the Belomorsk-Baltic Canal. The operational and strategic situation of the Soviet forces improved substantially, and the maneuvering freedom of the Red Banner Fleet increased. Good conditions were created for the conduct of subsequent offensive operations by the Soviet Army in the Baltic area and in the Far North as were the prerequisites for removing Finland, which had been fighting on the side of fascist Germany, from the war.

Soviet fightingmen demonstrated great combat skill and mass heroism in the operations. More than 93,000 were awarded orders and medals, and 78 fightingmen were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. A total of 132 formations and units were awarded the honorary names of Leningrad, Vyborg, Svirsk and Petrozavodsk, and 39 were awarded combat orders. Moscow paid formal homage to the attacking forces 4 times.⁶

The operations carried out by Soviet forces on the Karelian Isthmus and in South Karelia enriched Soviet military art with experience in breaching an enemy's defense in the difficult conditions of woods, swamps and lakes. This experience unquestionably deserves the most serious attention. It must be carefully studied and creatively used in the contemporary situation.

First of all, we should take note of the skillful selection of axes for the main thrusts. In the Vyborg operation the main axis coincided with the shortest distance to Vyborg. Maximum use could be made of the capabilities of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet on that axis. The offensive by the Karelian Front's main forces along the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga threatened the enemy's grouping in the area of Petrozavodsk with encirclement.

Close interaction between the land and naval forces had a substantial role in achieving the objectives of the operations. In addition to carrying our independent missions, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga and Onega Military Flotillas assisted the armies with their artillery, supported landing operations on the enemy's flanks and marine transportation of troops, and took part in joint combat operations to eliminate the enemy in Vyborg Bay. In a number of cases the fleet assigned its own aircraft to support the attacking troops.

The massed employment of artillery on the axes of the main thrusts by the fronts played a crucial role in the breakthrough of the enemy's defense. The organization and conduct of lengthy preliminary destruction of the enemy's permanent installations with artillery fire and air strikes on the eve of the offensive, as well as the conducting of prolonged artillery preparation, deserve attention.

Experience has shown that in difficult areas of woods and swamps with a large number of anti-tank obstacles, it is expedient to provide the tanks with mine-clearing personnel and equipment and shift them along the roads, and to use small groups of them in the infantry combat formations. The importance of engineer support for the offensive also increases in such a situation. It becomes essential to build cross-country roads in good time, to remove enemy obstacles and cover the combat formations of the attacking forces.

The Karelian partisans and underground fighters gave the front's fightingmen a great deal of assistance. They made strikes against the withdrawing subunits of enemy forces, destroyed their lines of communication and guarded centers of population against destruction and plundering by the enemy.

Like all the Soviet people, the present generation of our fightingmen sacredly honor the feat of the heroes who fought on the Karelian Isthmus and in South Karelia, and are preparing themselves to defend the socialist homeland, using the invaluable combat experience of the Great Patriotic War. The Leningrad fighters are adding to the glorious combat traditions of the war heroes and standing combat watch in a worthy manner on our great homeland's northwestern borders.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II, 1939-1945], Vol 9, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 27.
2. Ibid., Vol 9, p 29.
3. "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynе 1941-1945" [Operations by the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1959, p 264.
4. "Istoriya..." op. cit., Vol 9, p 33.
5. "Operatsii..." op. cit., Vol 3, p 271.
6. "Istoriya..." op. cit., Vol 9, p 39.

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MILITARY HISTORY

KUTAKHOV ON IMPLICATIONS OF WWII BATTLE FOR AIR SUPERIORITY

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[Article by twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Ch Mar Avn P.S. Kutakhov, commander in chief of the Air Forces and deputy USSR Minister of Defense: "Experience in Fighting for Strategic Air Supremacy During the Years of World War II and its Importance in the Contemporary Situation"]

[Text] The battle for air superiority is an historical category. It immediately became urgent when aircraft began to be used as an effective means of warfare. Extensive successes achieved in its development between World Wars I and II had a great deal to do with the reconsideration of the theory of the employment of air forces in a war, and especially the organization and execution of the battle for air superiority.

Various theories on "the separate air war" became widespread in the capitalist nations at that time. The theory of Italian fascist General Due was one of the best known. It essentially consisted in the creation of a powerful air army, which was to win air superiority independently and then make devastating strikes against industrial and political centers to deprive the enemy of the possibility of resisting and conducting warfare. Massed actions against airfields and supply bases alone were accepted as the basic and decisive method of achieving air superiority. Air battles and engagements were allowed as exceptions.

The belligerents launched a fierce struggle to gain air supremacy during the very first days of World War II, and especially during the Great Patriotic War.

The aggressive states achieved certain tactical and strategic results during a specific phase of the war, especially during the beginning. They resulted from a large number of political, military-economic and especially military factors. The air forces of fascist Germany and militaristic Japan were the first to carry out powerful, preemptive strikes against various targets in the border zone and the rear area. This produced exceptionally good situations for committing the main groupings of ground and naval forces to the engagement, which had been deployed in advance and were completely prepared for combat operations.

Attempting to seize the initiative in the air at the very beginning of the war, the German fascist command concentrated the aviation's efforts on inflicting unexpected, massed strikes against the most important airfields. The fascist

aviation simultaneously struck 24 airfields of the Polish Air Forces in the attack on Poland, for example, and 72 airfields in the invasion of France, Belgium and Holland, and carried out strikes against 66 airfields in our border districts on the first day of the war against the USSR. Considerable air forces were designated for inflicting the first and most powerful strikes against the airfields. To be specific, 700 of fascist Germany's aircraft used in the attack on Poland took part in strikes against airfields. Of the 3,824 aircraft which took part in the invasion of France, Belgium and Holland, 1700 operated against airfields during the first day of the war. The Hitlerite command concentrated 5,000 combat aircraft against the USSR, around half of which struck at airfields when the attack was begun.¹

The air forces of the nations which were the victims of the aggression suffered extremely large losses of aircraft, mainly on the ground. The Polish Air Forces, for example, lost 20 percent of their aircraft in one day (Poland had 824 combat aircraft at the beginning of the war). The French aviation lost around 600 aircraft on 11 and 12 May 1940 alone, mainly at airfields. By the end of 22 June our Air Forces had lost 1,200 aircraft, almost 800 of which were destroyed on the ground.

These results were the main factor making it possible for fascist Germany's Air Force to gain air superiority when the war was first unleashed and to retain it over a long period of time.

The fact should be mentioned that the German fascist command assigned the main role to ground-attack aircraft. At the beginning of the attack on the USSR, for example, the bomber aviation comprised 57.8 percent of the total German Air Forces, while fighters and reconnaissance aircraft made up 31.2 and 11 percent respectively. As a result, the German fascist aviation was unable to effectively counteract the effective and determined actions of Soviet fighters. Germany's military leadership was unable to correct this situation during the war.

A distinctive feature of the operations conducted by the Japanese Air Forces was the fact that since Japan did not possess aircraft capable of carrying out strikes against targets in the Pacific Ocean zone from the continent, it used deck-based aircraft as the main strike force. In the attack on the Pearl Harbor Naval Base and airfields on the Hawaiian Islands, for example, the Japanese used six aircraft carriers (with 360 aircraft) out of ten aircraft carriers (600 aircraft) for the main strike. As a result of the surprise attack, the U.S. Air Force lost 272 of 387 combat aircraft on the Hawaiian Islands within a 2-hour period.² On the first day of combat operations (8 December 1941), the Americans lost half of their heavy bombers and more than one-third of their fighters on the ground at airbases in the Philippine Archipelago. The British lost 60 of 110 aircraft based in the area of the Malacca Peninsula at airfields there. These losses predetermined the outcome of the battle for air superiority in the Pacific Ocean zone as a whole.

An analysis of the combat operations involved in gaining air superiority shows that the large results achieved by the aggressor in strikes against airfields at the beginning of the war were due not so much to the surprise of the attack by the German fascist and Japanese air forces, as to the unpreparedness of the air forces and air defense forces of the nations which were the targets of the aggression to repel massed air strikes, to the bunched basing of the aircraft,

to poor camouflaging of airfields and aircraft parking areas, to the fact that they were not removed to reserve airfields in good time, and the absence of a centralized system of control of the air and air defense forces.

A battle was waged for air superiority during World War II, both on the Soviet-German and on other fronts. It took place in conditions which differed considerably from those of the initial period, however. In addition, the enemies had a good knowledge of the weapons and combat equipment of each other's air forces, as well as the techniques and methods of employing them.

The nature of the combat operations carried out by the air forces of the allies in the West European Theater of Military Operations depended upon their military-political leaders. The latter attempted to prevent a weakening of the German fascist aviation, which had concentrated its main forces on the Soviet-German front.

At the very height of the struggle between the Soviet aviation and the German fascist air forces, the command elements of the USA and England devoted special attention to the planning of strategic bombings of military-industry facilities and administrative and political centers in Germany. Subsequently, in view of their poor results, the British command focused the main efforts of the aviation on bombing residential areas for purposes of crushing the morale of the civilian population. By 22 September 1941, the staff of the British Air Force had worked out a plan for destroying 43 German cities.

The American bomber aviation began combat operations in Western Europe in August 1942. The American and British command elements took different approaches to the selection of targets for the strategic bombings. The Americans devoted greater attention than did the British to the destruction of industrial and transport facilities. A committee of experts was set up to study aerial bombings on 9 December 1942 at the order of General Arnold, commander of the U.S. Army Air Corps (it was made up of officers from the planning department of the Air Force staff and civilian advisors). The committee had the task of preparing a report on the damage which aerial bombings could inflict upon Germany and which could create conditions favorable to an invasion of Western Europe by allied forces. The plan worked out called for the destruction of 76 targets broken down into six groups: shipyards and submarine bases, aviation and ball-bearing plants, synthetic rubber and tire plants, liquid fuel facilities and military transport facilities.³ The document shows that enterprises of the ship building and aircraft industries were to be the primary targets of the air strikes. Tank plants were bombed almost not at all, even though the Hitlerites devoted their main attention to the building of tanks from the spring of 1943, and ship production was curtailed. It was not surprising that tank production in Germany was 4.4-fold greater in 1944 than in 1942. Nor did strikes by the allied aviation significantly affect the functioning of the aircraft plants. They turned out almost three times as many aircraft in 1944 as in 1942.⁴

The plan for Operation "Point Blank," known as the plan for a joint bomber attack from the British Isles (OBN), was approved by a joint committee of the chiefs of staff on 18 May 1943. It was the initial document for planning combat operations of the U.S. and British strategic air forces. A directive issued

in accordance with the OBN plan assigned the strategic air forces the mission of weakening the German fighter aviation in the West. This mission was openly assigned only when the scales in the battle for strategic air supremacy on the Soviet-German front had tilted in our favor.

In postwar bourgeois historiography there is a trend to exaggerate in every possible way the significance of the massed bombings of Germany carried out by the U.S. and British Strategic Air Forces. While those bombings were of a certain significance in disrupting the functioning of fascist Germany's rear services and its transport, however, they did not play a crucial role in the defeat of the Third Reich.

German historian General K. Tippelskirkh stresses in his book, "History of World War II," that "the terrifying air raids carried out against the peaceful population and for purposes of destroying German cities neither contributed to nor accelerated the achievement of victory by the Western powers. Those raids were of no military importance, even in the broadest sense of the word."⁵ The anti-Soviet focus of the policy conducted by ruling circles of the USA and England was the basis for those operations. Key targets affecting the combat readiness of the German fascist forces on the Soviet-German front were always "lost" from view in the planning. This resulted in the operations of the strategic air forces of the allies diverging from the efforts of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Relying on the principles of Marxist-Leninist doctrine on war and the army and taking into account experience acquired in fighting for air supremacy in World War I and in local conflicts between the wars, Soviet military art proceeded from the premise that all services of the Armed Forces and all branches of troops should participate in the battle for air supremacy. The Temporary Instructions for Independent Operations by the Air Forces of the RKKA [Workers and Peasants Red Army]," issued in 1936, stated, however, that the combat aviation can successfully perform diverse missions in a war, including missions of destroying the enemy's main air forces, because of its weaponry, its speed and great range of operation. The maneuvers carried out in 1935 and 1936 showed that a battle for strategic air supremacy should be carried out in accordance with a single plan and on a broad front, with participation by the air forces of several fronts, the air reserve of the High Command and the nation's air defense aviation. Strategic air supremacy meant an air situation in which the Soviet Armed Forces and the nation's rear services could perform their assigned tasks successfully and without significant interference on the part of enemy aircraft. It did not rule out a constant and systematic battle for operational and tactical air supremacy.

An unprecedented air battle was initiated during the very first days of the war between the Soviet and the German fascist air forces in the air space from the Barents to the Black Sea. It ended in a brilliant victory for the Soviet aviation. The Soviet Air Forces had the crucial role in the winning of strategic air superiority as the most important condition for achieving a fundamental reversal in the war. More than 35 percent of all the sorties by the front aviation alone were executed in the performance of this mission. The Soviet aviation destroyed more than 57,000 of the 77,000 enemy aircraft destroyed on the Soviet-German front.

The battle for strategic air supremacy was carried out under the overall direction of Headquarters, Supreme High Command, in the interest of the war as a whole, in two periods.

The first period (from 22 June 1941 to November 1942) involved fierce fighting in the air, the rearming of the Soviet Air Forces, the perfecting of the organizational structure of air groupings, formations and units, a growing role for centralized control of the air forces involved, and the development and employment of more effective forms and methods of fighting for air supremacy.

At the beginning of the war the Soviet command countered mass raids by Hitlerite aircraft with active, offensive air battles by the fighter aviation and periodic strikes against enemy airfields within the borders of each front. As the striking power of the Soviet Air Forces grew, massed strikes by the air forces of adjacent fronts, long-range air groupings and the nation's naval and air defense air forces were made on individual strategic axes where the situation permitted this. These actions were actually air operations in many cases.

The battle of Moscow had an important place in the struggle to gain strategic air superiority. The determined battle, which lasted more than 3 months on the Moscow axis, resulted in enemy losses of more than 1600 aircraft in air battles and at air fields.⁶

The air battle was carried out in conditions extremely difficult for us. A large part of the aircraft plants in the European part of the nation had been forced to evacuate to the east and aircraft production had dropped significantly. As a result of steps taken by the beginning of the counteroffensive, however, the second German fascist air fleet, which numbered up to 700 aircraft was opposed by a grouping of Soviet aircraft which included around 1200 combat aircraft.⁷ This was the main reason why the initiative in the air gradually went over to the Soviet Air Forces. Toward the end of November, we succeeded in gaining operational air superiority on the crucial sector of the Soviet-German front for the first time in the Great Patriotic War. This set the stage for switching the ground forces to a counteroffensive.

An intense struggle for strategic air superiority continued during the winter and summer of 1942. It was now of a different nature, however. Having suffered significant losses of combat equipment and the best trained flight personnel, the Hitlerite command was forced to give up simultaneous, active air operations on all the fronts and to concentrate the efforts only on the main axes.

The center of the battle for air supremacy shifted to the southern wing of the Soviet-German front in the summer of 1942. By the beginning of the defensive engagement at Stalingrad, the German fascist command had concentrated a large air grouping there, which numbered 1200 aircraft and initially surpassed the strength of the Soviet aviation on that axis more than 2-fold. By that time the enemy aviation also had a qualitative superiority. In that situation, however, the actions of the Soviet aviation were determined ones. During the defensive engagement at Stalingrad, the German fascist aviation lost more than 1400 combat and transport aircraft in air battles and at air fields.⁸

A serious defeat was inflicted upon the German fascist aviation during the first period of the war as a result of active offensive operations by the Soviet Air Forces. Germany and its allies lost more than 15,000 aircraft. Their losses were only 3400 aircraft, or 4.6 times less, in all the other theaters of World War II during that time.

The second period of the battle for air supremacy (November 1942-August 1943) saw the achievement of qualitative and quantitative superiority over the enemy's air forces and the employment of more determined forms of warfare--air operations conducted in accordance with the plan of Headquarters, Supreme High Command, and extensive air engagements.

Headquarters, Supreme High Command, considered the outcome of the counteroffensive by our forces at Stalingrad to be directly dependent upon the gaining of air superiority. The supreme commander wrote the following in his 12 November 1942 reply to Army General G.K. Zhukov, representative of Headquarters: "Our experience in the war with the Germans has shown that an operation against the Germans can only be won if we have air superiority." He went on to propose the following: "...better to postpone the operation for a certain time and accumulate as many aircraft as possible."⁹ Emergency steps were taken to build up the forces at Stalingrad. By that time the air grouping numbered more than 1300 combat aircraft.¹⁰ The new, high-speed LA-5, YaK-76 and YaK-9 fighters which the forces were receiving made it possible to conduct effective air battles against the modified German ME-109 and VW-190 aircraft.

The balance of power which had been created made it possible to gain operational air superiority during the very first days of the counteroffensive, which the Soviet aviation retained until the end of the strategic offensive operation. The Soviet aviation made a significant contribution to the routing of one of the enemy's largest strategic groupings. During the defensive engagement and the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, the Soviet Air Forces, together with the National Air Defense Forces and the forces of the fronts destroyed a total of around 3,000 combat and transport aircraft in air battles.¹¹ During the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet Air Forces layed the foundation for a fundamental reversal in the battle for strategic air supremacy on the Soviet-German front. After that, the German fascist aviation did not succeed in seizing the initiative in the air for any sort of lengthy period of time in a single large operation.

Air engagements in the Kuban went down as a heroic page in the chronicle of combat operations conducted by the Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War. They were an integral part of the operations conducted by the North Caucasus Front to liberate the Taman Peninsula from the invaders and to destroy the remnants of German fascist Army Group A. The enemy concentrated as many as 1200 aircraft (around 38 percent of all the aircraft operating on the Soviet-German front at that time) at airfields on the Taman Peninsula, in the Crimea, the southern part of the Ukraine and the Donbass for operating against forces and facilities in the North Caucasus. The main stress was on the massed employment primarily of the bomber aviation. The grouping of Soviet Air Forces on that sector numbered 900 aircraft.¹² The enemy constantly built up its own air grouping during the combat operations. By the beginning of the air engagement (26 May-7 June 1943), its effective combat strength had been raised to 1400 aircraft. As a result, the German fascist command achieved a 1.5-fold quantitative superiority in aircraft.¹³

The outfitting of the Air Forces with new fighters, the employment of improved tactical procedures permitting the greatest possible use to be made of the improved combat capabilities of Soviet aircraft, the good morale and fighting spirit of our pilots, and centralized control--all of this contributed to the achievement of the Soviet aviation's victory over the enemy. The enemy lost 1100 aircraft in the air engagements over the Kuban, more than 800 of which were destroyed in air battles. We lost around 300 fighters.¹⁴ The glory of outstanding masters of aerial combat resounded over the Kuban during those days: A.I. Pokryshkin, the brothers D.B. and B.B. Glinok, V.I. Fadeyev, V.G. Semenishin, G.A. Rechkalov and many others. The air engagements over the Kuban were a school of combat skill for all the Soviet Air Forces. In addition, the enemy's superiority in aviation equipment had been completely eliminated by mid-1943.

The battle to seize the strategic initiative in the air reached its peak during the Battle of Kursk. Making ready for the offensive, the German fascist command concentrated the most battleworthy air groupings of the 4th and 6th air fleets there, and an additional 13 air groups were transferred from Germany, France, Norway and Poland to reinforce them.¹⁵ More than 2,000 of the enemy's 2,980 aircraft on the Soviet-German front were designated for action in the offensive operation on the Kursk salient. The fascist aviation was assigned the mission of regaining the initiative in the air.

When it prepared the Armed Forces for the summer engagements of 1943, Headquarters, Supreme High Command, attached exceptional importance to the completion of the battle for strategic air superiority. The Soviet air grouping in the defense at Kursk numbered 2,950 aircraft--that is, we had a 1.5-fold numerical superiority over the enemy aviation. The Soviet Air Forces conducted three large air operations on the southern and central axes in April, May and June of 1943 for purposes of weakening the enemy's aviation and creating conditions conducive to the gaining of air superiority. The experience of organizing and conducting the air operation carried out from 6 to 8 May 1943 and involving six air armies on a 1200-kilometer front is of greatest interest. It was the largest air operation of the Great Patriotic War in scale and quantity of equipment involved. In the course of that operation more than 500 aircraft were destroyed or put out of action at airfields and in the air. The German fascist aviation¹⁷ lost a total of more than 1,000 combat aircraft in those three air operations.

The air engagements and battles in the skies over Kursk reached an unprecedented scale. For example, 543 German aircraft took part in a massed raid on the rail junction at Kursk on 2 June. It was repelled by 386 Soviet fighters of the front aviation and the National Air Defense Forces, which shot down 104 German bombers. There were 175 group air battles just on 5 July, when the German fascist forces switched to an offensive, in which 279 enemy aircraft were shot down. Soviet pilots destroyed a total of more than 3700 aircraft in air battles and at airfields during the defensive period and the counteroffensive at Kursk--that is, almost double the number of aircraft the enemy had at the beginning of Operation Citadel.¹⁸

This high level of effectiveness was achieved with good combat training for the personnel, by taking into account weak spots in the enemy's planning and organization of combat operations for its aviation, through skillful use of the advantages of our aircraft by the flight personnel, by employing new tactical procedures and making extensive use of radio for directing the crews in the air.

The irreplaceable losses (especially in flight personnel) inflicted upon the enemy during the air operations, engagements and battles made it possible to conclude the battle for strategic air superiority in our favor.

The results of the battle and the steady reduction in the effective combat strength of the German fascist air forces on the Soviet-German front can be traced from the following data. While fascist Germany had around 5,000 combat aircraft at the beginning of the attack on the USSR in June of 1941 and 3500 in November of 1942, it had only 2,980 in July of 1943. Although the Soviet Air Forces suffered large losses at the beginning of the war, they rapidly restored and built up their fighting strength due to the efforts of the Communist Party and the Soviet government and to the hard work of the entire Soviet people. The operational army and the Navy had more than 3000 combat aircraft by November of 1942 and more 8,000 by July of 1943.¹⁹

The gaining of strategic air superiority created conditions conducive to the conduct of extremely large strategic offensive operations simultaneously on several axes, and to the more decisive maneuvering of forces and the conduct of continuous offensive operations by the Air Forces. The enemy's aviation, on the contrary, was forced to switch to offensive operations and was unable to exert a major influence on the actions of its ground forces in the operations or to carry out raids on targets in our nation's rear area to the very end of the war.

And so, the battles fought at Moscow and Stalingrad, in the Kuban and at Kursk went down in the history of the Great Patriotic War as important milestones on the path to the gaining of strategic air superiority by the Soviet Air Forces. The fundamental reversal in the air begun at Stalingrad, was completed at Kursk. The Wehrmacht's offensive strategy totally collapsed there.

The timely generalization of experience from the combat operations and development of the operational art and tactics of the Air Forces contributed significantly to the gaining of strategic air superiority. The experience acquired was rapidly adopted in the combat practices of the forces.

Three extremely important methods of fighting for air superiority were extensively employed during the war: the destruction of enemy aircraft in the execution of day-to-day combat operations within the framework of front and defensive operations, and between them; the execution of special air operations to destroy (or weaken) enemy air groupings; and air engagements. The battle for air supremacy in World War II, however, basically consisted in destroying enemy aircraft in air battles and engagements, as well as at airfields. The destruction of aircraft in the air had the crucial role. Out of 57,200 aircraft destroyed by the Soviet aviation on the Soviet-German front, 44,000 were shot down in air battles. For both sides, this was due, in the first place, to the fact that the dispersal of the aircraft, the enhanced vigilance and combat readiness of the air forces, the reinforced air defense, and the improved VNOS [air warning devices] make it difficult to achieve surprise and reduced the effectiveness of air operations against airfields; in the second place, to the fact that large air forces were enlisted for supporting the ground and naval forces in operations; and in the third place, to the difficulty of organizing strikes against airfields. This did not mean that strikes against airfields had little effect, however, or had lost their significance. On the contrary, the Soviet aviation used slightly

more than 2 percent of the sorties flown during the Great Patriotic War for destroying enemy air forces at airfields, putting more than 13,000 enemy aircraft out of action. This was more than 23 percent of the total number of combat aircraft destroyed on the Soviet-German front.

An average of five sorties were flown for each enemy aircraft put out of action on land--that is, 5- to 6-fold fewer than in air battles.²⁰

Strikes at airfields sometimes had the crucial role. The enlistment of extensive air forces for operations against airfields, which were organized as special air operations--ordinarily during preparations for large strategic operations--made it possible to destroy or seriously weaken the enemy's air groupings and to drastically alter the balance of air power in our favor, and assured their successful execution.

Other methods of fighting were also employed during World War II. Fascist Germany's Air Forces carried out raids against England's aircraft enterprises in 1940 and 1941, for example, while British and U.S. bombers struck at aircraft plants, oil fields and synthetic fuel enterprises of Germany and its allies. As we have already stated, however, this did not produce the desired effect. An analysis of the air combat operations of the allies shows that the Anglo-American command did not wish to actively engage in a struggle to undermine the enemy's air power. As a result, the battle for air supremacy in the Western European Theater of Military Operations was passive and did not meet with success until the end of the war. Furthermore, the fighting efficiency of Germany's Air Forces was not undermined by the strikes carried out by the Anglo-American aviation against aircraft enterprises and aviation fuel plants, but by the destruction of air groupings on the Soviet-German front.

With respect to the Soviet Air Forces, they also operated little against the enemy's aviation industry facilities and oil fields for well-known reasons. Such methods of fighting for air supremacy as the destruction of training centers for flight and technical personnel and the destruction of radar facilities, aircraft control posts, ammunition, materials and equipment dumps were employed even more rarely.

An analysis of questions pertaining to the gaining of air superiority during World War II permits us to draw certain conclusions. First of all, we must underscore the fact that a battle for air supremacy was conducted constantly and with great intensity throughout World War II. All services of the armed forces and branches of troops were used in it. The aviation always retained the leading place in that battle, however.

When the war was unleashed, hopes were mainly pinned on rapidly destroying the opposing air groupings by making surprise strikes against the most important airfields of the nations under attack. This brought about the immutable demand that in a situation of heightened tensions and increased menace on the part of an aggressor, specific steps must be undertaken and carried out in good time to prevent a surprise air attack or to minimize the effectiveness of first strikes.

The experience in repelling mass enemy air raids demonstrated the need for close interaction and centralization of control of all the personnel and equipment

involved, as well as for a precisely organized system for detecting enemy aircraft in the air and notifying one's fighters and ground air defense facilities.

The main specific feature of the battle for air supremacy in the Pacific Theater of Military Operations was the extensive use of aircraft carriers by the belligerents. Because of this, the most important mission in the battle for air supremacy was to destroy them.

The nations which were attacked and bore large losses were forced to strain their economies to the maximum and set up mass aircraft production. Experience has shown that this difficult task could easily be accomplished by states with a powerful economic base. This was demonstrated by the Soviet state. As a result of vigorous steps taken by the Communist Party and the Soviet government and of the unprecedented heroism demonstrated by workers in the rear, by the end of 1941 the nation's aircraft industry was constantly increasing the rate of output of new types of aircraft, which were not inferior and in certain respects were superior to the enemy's best aircraft with respect to tactical flight characteristics. Completion of the deployment of the aviation industry in the eastern part of the nation made it possible to provide the front with 21,700 aircraft in 1942 and with 29,900 in 1943. Fascist Germany's industry produced 11,600 aircraft in 1942 and 19,300 in 1943.

Headquarters, Supreme High Command, organized the battle for strategic air superiority. It defined the missions and objectives of the battle for air superiority and created air groupings on the sectors through the commander and staff of the Soviet Army Air Forces, and through its agents, coordinated the operations of front and long-range air groupings and formations being used to destroy the enemy's air groupings, and built up the efforts of the Air Forces.

Various forms and methods were used in the battle for strategic air superiority. The development of air attack means enlarged the arsenal and made it necessary to combine them in a comprehensive manner. Experience has taught us that the selection of forms and methods of striving for air superiority must be determined on the basis of an in-depth analysis of the state of the enemy's economy and of the operational and strategic situation in the theaters of military operations.

The war experience showed that the destruction or suppression of enemy air groupings altered the air situation most rapidly. At that time, it was impossible to alter the balance of air power rapidly and significantly affect the course of the armed struggle in the air by striking installations of the aircraft industry and training centers.

The fierce nature of the armed conflict made great demands of the training level of the flight personnel. A study of the combat operations shows that fighter pilots who were Heroes of the Soviet Union alone shot down more than 10,500 enemy aircraft, or almost one-fourth of those destroyed by Soviet aviation in air battles. The good results of the air battles fought by that group of pilots exceeded the average results by 3.5- to 4-fold.

Strategic air superiority was gained only as a result of the good morale and fighting efficiency of the flight, engineering and technical personnel and commanders in the Air Forces. The more complex and tense the combat situation, the

more vigorously was the party-political work performed in the Air Force units. It was closely linked with the specific missions facing the Soviet aviation in the specific phases of combat operations, and was distinguished by purposefulness, flexibility and a high level of effectiveness.

Soviet pilots demonstrated mass heroism. During the war 2,420 Soviet airmen were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union, 65 of them twice, and two pilots--A.A. Pokryshkin and I.N. Kozhedub--were awarded the title three times.

The outstanding victory of the Soviet Air Forces over fascist Germany's air forces was a result of the organizational and inspirational work performed by the Communist Party and the Soviet government to strengthen and develop the Soviet Army and Navy, and of the heroic labor of the Soviet people, who provided an ever increasing output of qualitatively new aircraft and armaments.

Combat operations in World War II began and ended with a fierce battle to seize the initiative in the air. The capabilities of the aviation have grown, and the precision characteristics of modern means of destruction have improved, and the battle for air superiority in the contemporary situation is thus even more important to the successful execution of operations of diverse scale. The possibilities of ground forces increase several-fold with the winning of air superiority. It is with good reason that the bulk of the total air capability is designated for accomplishing this mission in NATO exercises.

The experience of World War II underscores the need to engage in a vigorous and determined struggle with the enemy's aviation from the very beginning of combat operations for the purpose of gaining air superiority as rapidly as possible.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II, 1939-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 81; Vol 4, 1975, p 35.
2. Ibid., Vol 4, 1975, pp 388, 389.
3. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 9, 1978, p 89.
4. Ibid., p 90.
5. K. Tippelskirch, "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [History of World War II], Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1956, p 485.
6. "Sovetskiye Voyenno-Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynе 1941-1945 gg." [The Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1956], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 91.
7. Ibid., p 78, 79.
8. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No. 11, 1982, p 24.
9. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Memories and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1970, pp 404-405.

10. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 7, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 518.
11. "Istoriya..." op. cit., Vol 6, p 81.
12. "Sovetskiye..." op. cit., p 156.
13. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1983, p 24.
14. Ibid., p 25.
15. "Istoriya..." op. cit., Vol 7, p 128.
16. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 6, 1983, p 46.
17. I.V. Timokhovich, "Operativnoye iskusstvo Sovetskikh VVS v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voynе" [The Operational Art of the Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, pp 75, 80, 83.
18. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 6, 1983, p 54.
19. Ibid., No 3, 1972, p 30.
20. Ibid., No 9, 1976, pp 27-28.

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MILITARY HISTORY

COL GEN GAREYEV ON FRUNZE'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION, DISCIPLINE

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 84 (signed to press 28 Nov 84) pp 30-43

[Article by Col Gen M. Gareyev, doctor of economic sciences: "M.V. Frunze on Military Training and Indoctrination"; passages enclosed in slantlines printed in bold face]

[Text] Military indoctrination has always been regarded as a process of systematically and purposefully affecting the spiritual, volitional and physical development of servicemen for purposes of developing in them the good morale and fighting efficiency essential for the military service and for the performance of missions in a combat situation. When he considered questions of military training and indoctrination in organic unity, M.V. Frunze attached great importance also to the specifics of military indoctrination. The military organization he told us, is a special organization, one which demands a high level of exactness, precision, efficiency, stamina, rapid execution of all instructions, and so forth, of its members. He underscored in his speeches the fact that command personnel must, first of all, be able to rapidly assess the situation and make a well-based decision, be firm and persistent in its implementation, demonstrate determination, initiative and independence of action, and courage, know how to take a justified risk and assume responsibility for his decisions and actions in a complex situation, and possess other organizational and volitional qualities. He also placed great value on a commander's precision, stressing the fact that it must clearly demonstrate respect for the military collective. Precision and exactness must therefore be an inner need for the good commander.

Frunze considered the main tasks involved in the military indoctrination of all the personnel to be those of developing discipline, boldness, selflessness, physical endurance, the ability to stoically bear the deprivations of a combat situation, and preparedness to accomplish the combat mission, despite any difficulties. The need for all these qualities objectively stems from the nature of a combat situation.

Despite the obviousness of all this, an identical approach was not always taken to certain elements of military indoctrination in the revolutionary forces. Both during the French bourgeois revolution and the Civil War in America, and in the defense of the Paris Commune and the civil war in Russia, there were many outstanding military figures distinguished by talent, bravery, and other

*Continuation from VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 11, 1984, p 35.

kinds of military valor. While acknowledging the great importance of military indoctrination in principle, many of them still suffered from elements of false democratism in their practical work and sometimes underestimated the need for rigid and stern military indoctrination, especially in matters of discipline and organization. In our nation, this was graphically demonstrated in speeches by the "military opposition" at the 8th Congress of the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)] in 1919. It essentially opposed the party line of creating a regular, centrally controlled and disciplined army. For example, its members strongly objected to the requirement contained in the Internal Service Regulations of the Red Army that Red Army men salute their commanders, viewing this as "relics of the order of autocracy and serfdom."

M.V. Frunze was a military figure and theoretician who had an especially profound understanding of the importance of military indoctrination and attached exceptional importance to it. His thoroughly revolutionary character, his simplicity and democratism in his personal contacts did not prevent him from being stern and demanding with respect to military discipline and to military indoctrination in general.

In light of this, it is not difficult to understand how important it was for the fate of our military organization that during such a turning point in the Red Army's development when such identically dangerous phenomena as false democratism and survivals from the old-regime ways were making themselves known, a man was placed at the head of the Soviet Armed Forces by our party, who thoroughly understood the nature of military organization and discipline, on the one hand, and was both a professional revolutionary, a party figure and a most experienced front commander, and had unquestionable prestige at all levels of our army and navy--among the commissars, the commanders and all of the personnel--on the other. His position of principle with respect to military indoctrination, which was supported by our party's Central Committee, made it possible to overcome negative developments in this area and predestined the only correct approach to the training of the Armed Forces for many years in the future.

M.V. Frunze on the Importance of Military Indoctrination

M.V. Frunze considered absolute obedience and conscientious performance to be the very foundation of discipline and of military order as a whole. In his opinion, the good commander should not only know how to issue orders, but also how to carry our orders and obey superiors without question.

History has preserved for us an example which could be included in all the readers for military indoctrination. When he arrived on the eastern front in 1919 as commander of the 4th Army, Frunze visited all the troops and conducted inspection parades in the course of preparing for an operation. He regarded sharpness and organization in the personnel as one of the most important elements of troop discipline and of their preparedness to carry out combat missions and fulfill their military duty to defend the Republic.

During a troop inspection at Uralsk, Mikhail Vasil'yevich was forced to criticize certain commanders for the low level of discipline in their units. One of the brigade commanders then demanded that the army commander attend a

meeting of commanders to explain his criticisms at the inspection parade. Rumors had spread in the units that Frunze was a general from the czarist Army and was therefore implanting the ways of the old regime. Frunze did not answer the first note, but when he received a second "summons," he decided to visit the brigade. In doing so, he was also subtly aware of the military-psychological factors. Attempts were made to persuade him not go or to go at a later time, when the brigade's command personnel had calmed down. Frunze felt that a psychological breakthrough was needed in the army commanders and political workers, however, since some of them had been afraid to visit the units since Commissar Lindov had been killed. He could take a reinforced guard along, but this might only lead to complications and not produce results. After weighing all the pluses and minuses, Frunze made the decision to visit the brigade accompanied by a single aide-de-camp.

Eye-witnesses tell us that when Frunze appeared at the commanders' meeting, everyone fell silent, but no one stood up. The mood was somber. Threats were made. Those who spoke mainly stressed the fact that they were fighting and shedding their blood, while people were coming and reprimanding them, teaching them to march and arranging reviews for generals.

M.V. Frunze permitted everyone to speak his piece. He then told those gathered, enunciating every word: "First of all, I would like to say that I am not here as an army commander. An army commander cannot and should not attend such a meeting. I am here as a member of the Communist Party. I speak for that party which sent me to work in the army, when I reaffirm all of my criticisms about the deficiencies I noticed in the units of which you are the commanders and commissars and consequently, for which you bear responsibility to the Republic.... Your threats have not frightened me. I am a Bolshevik. A czarist court sentenced me to death twice, but it could not force me to renounce my convictions. You say that I am a general. Not one of czarist hard labor, however, but a general of the revolution. I am unarmed, and I am here with only my aide-de-camp. I am in your hands. You can do what you like with me. With respect to my summons as a commander today, however, I can tell you without hesitation that if this sort of thing happens again, I will punish you in the most unmerciful manner, even execute you by fire. When you violate discipline, you are destroying the army. The Soviet government will not permit this."

Mikhail Vasil'yevich fell silent. Stunned by the truth spoken to their face, the others present were also silent. When he had taken leave and headed for the exit, however, the commanders rose and stood at attention. Some of them went out to see him off.¹

M.V. Frunze had to function in such extraordinary situations more than once. Any professional military leader could envy the profound understanding of the principles of military discipline and of military indoctrination as a whole, and the firmness and steadfastness demonstrated by M.V. Frunze in supporting military order from his very first days as army commander.

M.V. Frunze persistently implemented that line in deciding all issues pertaining to the organizational development and training of the Armed Forces after the civil war. He attached special importance, first and foremost, to maintaining a high level of military discipline in the army and navy. Discussing the

methods used for strengthening discipline in the czarist army, where automatic obedience and enforcement by means of repression, intimidation and insults to the personal dignity of the soldiers were the main methods, he explained that discipline should be maintained in the Red Army on the basis of a high level of revolutionary awareness in the personnel and a combination of methods of conviction and force, with conviction as the main method.

M.V. Frunze underscored the fact that we demand firm revolutionary order and want every commander, political leader and Red Army man to bear the stamp of thorough, solid and inwardly aware revolutionary discipline in his daily life, his work and even in his appearance. We pay attention also to appearance, because the latter reflects the inner substance.

During inspection parades at the Tiflis Garrison in 1925, Frunze was especially disturbed by instances of lax behavior in the formation, stirring and conversation, even among the commanders and political workers. In the critique, Frunze pointed out with total strictness that discipline in the formation reflects everything taking place in the military unit. He convincingly explained that all of this is required not for the sake of a parade, but for the military indoctrination of the personnel, since modern military affairs, which involve the extensive use of equipment, are extremely complex. "In addition to knowledge and awareness, they require adroitness, skill, efficiency and precision in the actions of each soldier. Fulfilling the regulation demands 'with apathy' and 'with sluggishness' is certain to bring defeat. Anyone who equates those requirements of military indoctrination to an attempt to implant the callous drilling of the old czarist army therefore either understands nothing about military affairs or is simply an enemy and a traitor, working deliberately to weaken the fighting strength of the Red Army. There must be order and discipline in the Red Army, and we are obligated to see to that. All of the requirements contained in or regulations... must be unconditionally implemented... so that the appearance and the inward state of the Red Army tells every worker and peasant of the Union that it is prepared to enter into battle with the enemy at any moment and that it hopes to withstand the battle with honor. Both our enemies and our friends must sense simply by looking at our Red Army soldier and commander that this is a united, organized and solid force, one which speaks of the existence of firm revolutionary will and deep inner strength with its every action, word and move."²

On Ways of Providing the Personnel With Military Indoctrination

It has already been stated that M.V. Frunze considered problems of military indoctrination in inseparable linkage with the political indoctrination of the servicemen. A sole, 2-year political training program was put into effect in 1925. The political classes were designed to develop a communist world outlook, which, by determining the individual's stance in life, would also be of crucial importance for the military indoctrination. M.V. Frunze stressed the fact that political training contributes the most to military indoctrination when it is skillfully linked with the tasks of combat training and of strengthening military discipline, when it convincingly describes the meaning of military service and the demands contained in the military oath and regulations. He considered the most important task of military indoctrination to be that of providing every serviceman with a profound understanding of the significance of his military

duty and of his personal responsibility to defend the homeland, of making all of this infinitely precious to him, as Frunze expressed it, something without which it would seem to him that "life itself is not worthwhile."

He saw the linkage between the political classes and the combat training and military indoctrination not just as a matter of linking their subject matter with the tasks being performed by the troops. He was convinced that the most important thing was for the indoctrination provided in the political classes to be continued in different forms in other classes and in daily life. He saw the main deficiency in the indoctrination of the personnel as the discrepancy between what is said about discipline and military order in the classes and that which is actually done. All of the indoctrinal work suffers most of all from this. If regulation order is discussed in the political and other classes, but the commanders and political workers ignore violations of the regulation demands in their daily life or even violate them themselves, this corrupts the personnel and leads them to believe that it is not so very important to do what they are told in the political classes.

This is precisely why Frunze stressed with such persistence the importance of the personal example set by commanders and political workers. It was his opinion that the power of the personal example lies in the fact that it is the most visible and serves as an extremely important means of developing awareness, volition, character, traditions and military habits in the servicemen.

M.V. Frunze also explained, however, that no matter how many political classes, talks and other general indoctrinational measures are conducted, or how well they are conducted, it is impossible to develop these qualities with any sort of accounts of heroism, courage and discipline, just as it is impossible to learn to swim just by hearing a lecture on the matter, without getting into the water. He understood very well that in order to develop good morale and fighting efficiency in the soldiers, they must be placed into situations in all the classes and exercises and in their daily life, in which they are forced to demonstrate those qualities systematically and constantly.

M.V. Frunze believed that keeping the troops in a passive state for a long period of time was one of the factors producing indecisiveness in the commanders and faintheartedness in the Red Army soldiers. During a switch to a defense in the war, even if the enemy was not attacking, he therefore demanded that our troops actively engage in reconnaissance, raids on the enemy's flanks and rear area, and limited combat operations. A good commander should always strive for and seek combat, remembering the Suvorov precept that it is better to go to meet danger than to wait for it where one is. He also strove to see that the troops were not idle in peacetime, but constantly engaged in intensive combat training. It is precisely active and determined combat operations, during a war or in peacetime exercises, which contribute the most to the development of volitional qualities both in the commanders and in all of the personnel. Frunze pointed out that volition can only be developed in the commander or the Red Army man in the process of overcoming difficulties, stressing the fact that all personnel bear great deprivations and physical and psychological stress in a combat situation. The fightingmen must be conditioned for such difficulties in peacetime so that they are not unexpected when a war begins.

In many of his speeches and articles, M.V. Frunze stressed the fact that it is only possible to develop such qualities as discipline and organization in the personnel when the entire military lifestyle is based on precise and absolute adherence to the daily routine and fulfillment of the demands contained in military regulations. He attached great importance to drill. Exemplary internal order in the disposition of the unit and in the barracks, when it is not achieved just occasionally, in all-out spurts, but is maintained systematically on a daily basis, is of great indoctrinal importance. Mikhail Vasil'yevich considered guard duty and internal duty details to be a good school of military indoctrination and demanded that all of the official regulations governing them be scrupulously observed.

M.V. Frunze's idea that military order should not be maintained in the Red barracks by pressure from the commander, but should become a personal need for every serviceman as a result of skillful military indoctrination, was a remarkable one. He was constantly concerned that the onerous atmosphere of oppression, harassment and alienation of the soldiers might be brought from the old army into the Red Army barracks. He wanted the barracks to be something more than a place of military training for the Red Army man. He wanted it also to be a place of political and cultural indoctrination, so that the Red Army man did not feel burdened by the fact that he was separated from his home environment.

M.V. Frunze singled out both a high level of demandingness to subordinates and great concern for them, especially with respect to meeting their material needs. He considered indifference for the people and bureaucratic handling of their needs to be absolutely unacceptable in the Red Army. As soon as the army went over to a peacetime status, even in a situation of ruin and universal disorder, Frunze immediately began concerning himself with improving the barracks. He thought a great deal and sought advice from commanders and political workers on how to provide at least basic comfort in them for the Red Army men.

Mikhail Vasil'yevich believed that commanders and political workers should proceed as a single front in the matter of establishing firm military order. He sharply condemned the individual instances in which commanders demanded order, while the political workers, to the contrary, tried to act as "defenders of the Red Army men against the oppression of commanders." Frunze pointed out that this is not typical of the majority of political workers, but that even individual instances are intolerable, since there is nothing more harmful and more unacceptable to the Red Army than this kind of relations. While always speaking of the political workers with great respect, he stressed the fact that our political worker, as a representative of the Communist Party, must be the agent of the concept of order and discipline, a concept which is most inherent precisely in our party. The political worker must therefore be that element which promotes the strengthening of discipline and military order the best, the most reliably and durably.

M.V. Frunze noted that among both certain commanders and political workers, "in many cases there is an unprincipled 'playing up' to the Red Army masses, a desire to demonstrate one's outstanding 'democratism,' instead of a firm and absolute demand that the service duty be fulfilled. This 'democratism' is the grossest distortion of each and every principle underlying the discipline of our Red Army. An order is an order. Attempts to persuade or urge people to fulfill

orders are themselves essentially the grossest violation of discipline."³ He was convinced, however, that strictness and demandingness must not result in alienation or isolation of the commanders and political workers from the Red Army masses. M.V. Frunze included in the most valuable qualities of a commander the ability to live in the midst of the Red Army masses, to be in daily contact with his subordinates, to know their needs and requests and to concern himself with satisfying them.

M.V. Frunze assigned a leading role in the military indoctrination to the junior command personnel, who "form the foundation on which the entire matter of the unit's discipline, fighting unity and combat readiness rests. Constantly in the midst of the Red Army men, the junior command personnel constitute the sole agent of all the indoctrinal influences and pressures on the unit from above."⁴

M.V. Frunze proceeded from the premise that it is not just the commander and the political worker who are the active agents in the military indoctrination system, but also the Red Army man, who must grasp all of the elements of discipline and military order not under duress and not as an onerous duty, but as a profoundly realized necessity, making it possible for him, together with the entire military collective, to successfully carry out the sacred mission of defending the socialist homeland.

The Further Development of M.V. Frunze's Ideas on Military Training and Indoctrination

The continued development of military training and indoctrination has been carried out, just as it was at the beginning of the organizational development and training of the Soviet Armed Forces, in accordance with the demands of Marxist-Leninist ideology and with our party's decisions on matters of communist indoctrination of the workers and the strengthening of the combat capability of the army and navy. M.V. Frunze's practical measures and his theoretical military works had a substantial influence with respect to the shaping of the principles and the specific forms and methods of military training and indoctrination. The principles worked out by him with respect to these matters were basically reflected in all subsequent Red Army regulations and manuals. Suffice it to say, for example, that the Temporary Internal Service Regulations of the RKKA [Workers and Peasants Red Army], which went into effect in 1924, existed until 1937.

The forms and methods of military training and indoctrination were constantly perfected in accordance with the changes occurring in the sociopolitical composition, the technical equipment and the organizational structure of the Armed Forces, and in military art. Forms and methods of operational and combat training underwent the greatest development in the 30's and 40's.

The control agencies and troops engaged in a great deal of intense operational and combat training prior to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. The development of military affairs was making increasingly greater demands of the army's military training and indoctrination each year, however. At the same time, the demandingness of those in charge of these matters, and the training and indoctrinal methods did not always measure up to the new tasks. Demandingness with respect to the military indoctrination of the personnel was relaxed somewhat in the 30's, for example.

Based on the experience of the Soviet-Finnish War and World War II, which had just begun, the party Central Committee and the Red Army's command element took decisive steps to improve the entire system of combat training, and especially to strengthen discipline and military order, and to improve the military indoctrination in general. An enormous amount of work was carried out within a short time to bring the troop training into closer conformity with wartime demands. There was very little time left before the war would begin, however. Drastic steps taken during those years to further improve the military training and indoctrination appeared unjustifiably severe to some military cadres with inadequate experience. The Great Patriotic War made even harsher demands in this respect, however.

Throughout the war, the Red Army engaged persistently and intensively in combat training, taking into account the specific experience gradually being acquired and the forthcoming combat missions. The combat operations themselves provided an irreplaceable school for perfecting the combat skill, the morale and fighting efficiency of the personnel.

The main conclusion drawn from the war experience in this area was that combat training only retains its meaning and conforms to its purpose, when it never under any circumstances strays from the reference points defining the nature of a future war. The lessons from the war confirmed with exceptional force the wisdom and vitality of Lenin's statement: "Intensified military training for a serious war requires not a spurt, not a war cry and not a battle slogan, but lengthy, intensive, extremely determined and disciplined work on a massive scale."⁵

Since the war the system of military training and indoctrination has continued to be perfected, taking into account the experience of the Great Patriotic War and the development of nuclear and other new types of weapons and military equipment. Fundamental qualitative changes in military affairs have immeasurably increased the demands made of the military training, the moral and political qualities, and the ideological and psychological conditioning of the personnel. Since the war, and especially in recent years, the military training and indoctrination have been raised to a new and higher level on the basis of these demands, one corresponding to the nature of modern combat operations.

Tactical and special tactical exercises and maneuvers have an especially large role in enhancing the field, air and naval training. All of the best things accumulated in our Armed Forces and in other armies of the socialist nations have been reflected in the methods used for preparing and conducting them. The following are characteristic features of modern military training and indoctrination: maximum conformity to a combat situation; increased complexity of the missions and enlargement of the range of subjects studied, taking into account the level of development of military art; thorough consideration of the specific features of the theaters of military operations; and the abundant inclusion of field firings, missile launchings and other practical actions involving the use of real weapons and combat equipment in the exercises. The exercise directors are more and more graphically demonstrating an ability to place the commanders, staffs and troops being trained into the complex conditions of an acute and dynamic situation, which most completely reproduce the combat operations typical of modern warfare. Joint exercises by armies of the socialist nations play an enormous role in the strengthening of combat unity. They are a real school of

fraternal friendship and combat solidarity among the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact states.

Because of the increased complication of the international situation, however, the new round in the arms race unleashed by imperialism's reactionary forces and the undisguised reliance of the leadership of the USA and other NATO nations on military force and on the achievement of military-technological superiority over the Soviet Union, Soviet military cadres do not have the right to be content with what has been achieved. Marshall of the Soviet Union D.F. Ustinov, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and USSR Minister of Defense, has pointed out that the dialectics of the development of military affairs are such that more difficult and important tasks are performed at each new stage. To go further without fail, to achieve more without fail--these words spoken by Lenin have the force of a law for all the personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces in the contemporary international situation, in the era of scientific and technological progress.

In view of all this, contemporary military training and indoctrination is based on the requirement that the troops be taught how to perform missions in the most difficult conditions which could develop in a future war, if we do not succeed in preventing one.

In accordance with decisions coming out of the 25th and 26th Party Congresses on taking a comprehensive approach to the organization of indoctrination of the Soviet people, the training of the troops (forces) must be closely linked with the ideological-political, moral and military indoctrination of the personnel and must take into account the specific missions being performed by the troops and naval forces. Observance of the principle of party-mindedness in the training and in the conduct of all training and indoctrinational measures gives the entire process of training and military indoctrination a highly ideological quality and creates the foundation for a thorough mastery of military affairs.

An analysis of past experience, of M.V. Frunze's military-pedagogical legacy and of new factors and conditions for the organizational development and training of the Armed Forces shows that further enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of the military training and indoctrination may take the following main directions.

/In the first place, it may be in the direction of further perfecting the planning of combat training and of all training and indoctrinational measures/, in order to assure that the personnel, particularly the military cadres, master the modern achievements of military science and military art, which form the substance of the military training and indoctrination, in good time.

M.V. Frunze himself had to deal with the fact that one of the most important and complex questions pertaining to planning is that of determining the practical number of drills, exercises and other measures to be conducted in the military training and indoctrination. On the one hand, there is an objective need to constantly increase the number of training and indoctrinational measures, and on the other, the fact that an excessive increase in the number may reduce their quality and effectiveness. It is perfectly apparent that an objective approach needs to be taken to this matter, one which takes the modern requirements of the troop training most fully into account.

Preparations for and the conduct of combat operations today embrace a large range of diverse technical military, tactical and special subjects such as the placing of troops and staffs on a war footing in various situations of military danger or the unleashing of a war by the aggressor, troop movements and marches over great distances, and offensive and defensive battles. Methods of performing various tactical missions must be thoroughly worked out as a part of each type of battle: meeting engagements, making or repelling counterattacks, forcing water barriers, diverse aspects of combat, rear and technical support, and others. It is impossible to accomplish this in one or two drills or exercises in the course of a year, even if all of the combat training measures are conducted. It is therefore necessary for the staffs to compile a list of the most important matters stemming from the substance of military art, matters which absolutely must be worked out with the control organs and the troops, and the sequence worked out for their study in the combat training process. The planning should assure that the main questions of preparing for and conducting various types of combat operations are worked out within a specific period of time. Only this will provide the formations and units with the proper combat readiness.

The planning of the combat training should provide for the fullest possible use and the skillful combining of the entire range of forms and methods: assemblies on training methods and monthly classes for commanders; staff drills and military games; command-staff and special tactical exercises with the troops, and combined-arms tactical exercises.

/In the second place, the development of the qualities essential for demonstrating a high level of military art in the officers is an important direction for enhancing the effectiveness of the military training and indoctrination/, qualities about which M.V. Frunze was so concerned. As opponents of the arms race, we are not striving for military-technological superiority, but we still do not plan to be inferior to anyone in military skill. Perfecting the military art of the military cadres and the combat training of all the personnel is one of the extremely important and inexhaustible sources for increasing the fighting strength of the Soviet Armed Forces without any additional material outlays. It is therefore the task of military cadres at the contemporary stage to make full use of this source. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that as military affairs develop, the need to develop military valor, morale and fighting efficiency is increasing, while the conditions for manifesting them are becoming increasingly difficult.

V.I. Lenin had the following to say: "...no school and no university is worth anything, if the practical ability is lacking."⁶ This is especially important in military art. It is impossible to develop military art without profound theoretical knowledge, of course. It should be borne in mind, however, that the very best theoretical views only become a material force and an integral part of military art when they are practically mastered not only by individual military chiefs and commanders, but also by the bulk of the officer personnel. During the Great Patriotic War, commanders at all levels persistently studied the art of preparing for and conducting combat operations.

All questions had to be worked out with particular thoroughness and in detail for organizing interaction and the combat operations as a whole. Today, when

one looks at the planning documents worked out for operations before the beginning of the Soviet-Finnish War or prior to the beginning of certain unsuccessful offensive operations of 1941-1942, everything appears extremely proper, and formally, they were made out properly: From the theoretical standpoint, the missions and the sequence for executing them were confidently defined, the necessary personnel and equipment were allocated, and certain other tasks were correctly performed. Initially, however, those operations were not successful. The main cause of the failures was a lack of thorough knowledge of the enemy, as a result of which the enemy was not reliably neutralized. Far from everything planned could be implemented precisely and in good time in the preparations for an operation. In general, the work of the commanders and staffs lacked specificity, detail, thoroughness in the organization and support of combat operations, and skillful organizational work in the forces, at the site. When these things are lacking, the very best plans and brilliant reports on them become meaningless. The planning of an operation or battle and briefings on the missions are a very important part, but only the beginning, of the enormous practical job of preparing for the operation and the individual combat operations.

It is very important to fully work out in complete detail in the exercises, all questions pertaining to the practical organization of interaction, the organization of combat operations as a whole and their combat, technical and rear services support. As much time must be allocated for accomplishing these missions in exercises as would be required in a combat situation.

Even in command-staff exercises, in which only certain designated subunits are involved, they should perform all of the activities planned as part of preparations for the battle (the practical organization and performance of reconnaissance, engineer organization of the area, the stockpiling of the established quantities of material supplies, the performance of the specified technical servicing of the combat equipment, and others).

It follows from this that the qualities essential for demonstrating a high level of military art are developed primarily by scrupulously implementing the main requirement for the training and military indoctrination of the troops--that they be taught that which will be required in a future war, should one be forced upon us.

/The third direction for enhancing the effectiveness of the troop training is the improvement and further development of forms and methods of military training and indoctrination/.

Independent work by the officer cadres is the most important way to improve their training level. V.I. Lenin stated that "without a certain amount of independent work, the truth will not be found in a single serious matter, and he who is afraid of work deprives himself of the possibility of finding the truth."⁷ It is apparent from Lenin's statement that the main thing in self-education is comprehension of the material studied and a search for the truth. This cannot be fully achieved with any other kind of training. V.G. Belinskiy also stated that "an idea which has been heard or derived from reading and perhaps, properly understood, but which has not been taken through one's own essence and not been given the stamp of one's own personality, is dead capital...."⁸

In the matter of developing independent, developed operational thinking in the command and supervisory personnel, M.V. Frunze attached great importance to the thorough study of the history of military art both at military educational institutions and in the forces. He strove not for the abstract study of military history, but for the ability to derive from it that which is essential for the present and for the future.

It is especially essential for the contemporary officer to work constantly to increase his military knowledge and improve his creative thinking.

The preparation of military cadres to perform their functional duties during a war is unquestionably still the main direction for their military training and indoctrination. The requirement that the troops be taught that which will be needed in a war can only be fulfilled, however, with skillful organization of the work of commanders, political workers and staff officers in peacetime. In addition to questions of military art, the basic principles of the art of control and the forms and methods of combat and political training, military indoctrination, organization of the service of the troops, the strengthening of military discipline and certain other aspects of directing the daily life of the troops need to be thoroughly studied at the VUZ's and in the system of officer training in the forces. Troop management on a truly scientific level is impossible without this.

In the contemporary situation, when the amount of military knowledge and practical skills essential to the officers is increasing, and it is practically impossible to increase the amount of training time, it is essential to intensify the training process, to extensively and persistently adopt progressive training methods, and to make fuller use of the achievements of psychology, pedagogy and cybernetics.

We still have the extremely important task of perfecting the troop training methods and achieving combat coordination in the subunits and units, beginning with the planning of the training and the setting up of an instructive initial situation, and ending with the practicing of combat operations. First of all, it is very important for the initial situation to correctly reflect the possible conditions under which the combat missions will be performed. The initial situation and all additional hypothetical problems introduced for building it up and practicing the combat operations must reproduce to the fullest possible extent the nature of modern combat, conform to the objectives of the exercises, place the trainees in difficult ground, naval and air situations, and abound with acute situation requiring profound thought, difficult creative daring and the resulting original decisions, rapid reaction to changes in the situation and the ability to find a way out of the most difficult situations.

/Today, a number of new problems are arising also in the specifics of military indoctrination/. The importance of military indoctrination is increasing significantly as a result of basic qualitative changes in military affairs, on the one hand. On the other hand, in the situation in which the level of equipment of the army and navy with complex armaments is rising and narrowly specialized technical experts form an increasing portion of their personnel, we are seeing individual manifestations of underestimation of the importance of the military formation, internal order and certain military rituals. There have

always been shortcomings in this area, and they cannot be fully eliminated, since there is a continuous process of military indoctrination of new generations of young fightingmen. If everyone proceeded from the premise that this is the result of failings and that we need to do a better job in this area, it would be simpler to solve the problem. However, the fact is that certain young officers sometimes question whether some military rituals have not become anachronisms.

Military affairs are indeed becoming more complex, and more and more frequently, there is not enough time to cover all aspects of military life. Even the fact that people have become better educated is creating new problems in the process of military education and indoctrination, along with the advantages. People no longer take anything on faith and do not accept senseless or any other kind of unjustified actions in any matter. In short, it has become more difficult to resolve questions of military indoctrination, and a new approach and somewhat different work methods are required for the indoctrinators themselves. Briefly stated, essentially what is required is considerably greater conviction, awareness and understanding in the methods of military indoctrination, and a closer, organic linkage of these with the performance of the combat tasks.

It must be said most definitely, however, that the basic reforms occurring in military affairs have involved no changes which would justify the downplaying of military indoctrination. On the contrary, everything indicates that the modern military service is making increased demands with respect to it, and we need to work even more seriously on this matter.

If it has always been important to be able to rapidly restore control, subordinate the troops to a single will and maintain their organization and fighting capacity, one can imagine how difficult and important this is in a modern combat situation, when the personnel must endure enormous psychological stress and when entire subunits and control posts can be put out of action within a short period of time.

/The objective of military indoctrination in the contemporary situation is one of developing in the personnel a large number of special qualities essential in combat, ensuring a high level of organization, discipline, precision and timeliness in the execution of orders and combat instructions under any circumstances, in difficult situations, achieving a situation in which all of the subunits and units are well controlled and any command is rapidly received and carried out with initiative and independence/ of action, and of getting the troops to be determined and bold in an offensive, steadfast and determined in a defense, to be physically steadfast and to courageously endure the hardships and deprivations of a combat situation.

Recalling his own service, Marshall of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov wrote the following: "I was accused of excessive demandingness, which I considered to be an indispensable quality of the Bolshevik and commander. When I look back on it, I believe that I actually was sometimes too demanding and not always restrained and tolerant with respect to the actions of my subordinates. I would be disturbed by some unconscious act in the work or the conduct of a serviceman. Some people did not understand, and I myself was apparently not tolerant enough

of human weaknesses."⁹ The combining of profound respect for the individual and a high level of demandingness is truly the main principle of military indoctrination. Inadequate demandingness in peacetime costs too dearly in a war. The supervisor who is not properly demanding in time of peace, although this might sometimes impress some people, is actually demonstrating real respect for his subordinates least of all. The experience of many centuries has taught us that the more rigid demandingness is in peacetime, just as combat reality itself is, the fewer will be the losses and the more victories there will be in a combat situation. Unfortunately, however, this ancient truism, which is known to all and manifests itself most clearly and graphically in a war, is beginning to be forgotten in peacetime.

The great art of military indoctrination of Suvorov, Frunze, Zhukov and other outstanding military leaders lay in the fact that even in peacetime they themselves could clearly see the only true objective of military indoctrination, what one should strive for in order to honorably fulfill his duty in time of war, and were able to reveal it to their subordinates. And when they were severly demanding of the troops under their command with respect to the military training and indoctrination, they were demonstrating both the greatest concern for the interests of the homeland and humaneness and true respect for the individual in the highest and most noble sense of the terms.

A specific knowledge of the mental makeup of each individual is also highly important in the matter of military indoctrination. "...In the broad sense of the term," V.A. Sukhomlinsky writes, "indoctrination is a multifaceted process of constant spiritual enrichment and renewal--both for those who are being indoctrinated and those who are indoctrinating. Furthermore, this process is characterized by a profound individuality of phenomena: A certain pedagogical fact, true in one case, is invalid in a second and absurd in a third case. This is the nature of our pedagogical work."¹⁰

At the contemporary level of education and development of the personality of the fightingmen, it is impossible to expect any sort of real success in the indoctrinational work without well organized, well conceived and purposeful individual work. Consequently, individual work with each person, especially with each NCO and officer, is now assuming crucial importance along with general measures, especially in the matter of strengthening military discipline. Figuratively speaking, all general measures, those conducted in the masses of the personnel, are like area fire by the artillery--there is very little likelihood that the shell will hit the target. In the psychological respect, the individual work is like firing by direct laying at a target which has been thoroughly reconnoitered and zeroed in on. It is incomparably more effective.

And if this is true, then we cannot consider to be justified the practice whereby the plans for the indoctrinational work in certain units include only general measures, while the individual work is permitted to take its own course and is essentially not planned in any way. In those cases it is reduced basically to a matter of working with those who have already committed certain deviations from the service, and it therefore does not fully achieve its purpose.

It is in the interest of the work to perform the individual work purposefully, according to thoroughly developed and well conceived plans, extending its influence to all of the personnel and forestalling any possible deviations from the military service regulations.

M.V. Frunze thus taught us that the forms and methods of military training and indoctrination should be constantly improved in accordance with the general development of military affairs.

The new weapons, the growing role of the time factor and the establishment of large professional armies in the leading capitalist nations are making increased demands of the readiness of the forces to immediately execute the combat missions assigned to them. The importance of qualitative indices in the combat training of the troops and naval forces is increasing sharply as a result, and the substance and methods of combat training need to be further improved. The in-depth study and further development of M.V. Frunze's ideas on matters of military training and indoctrination can contribute a great deal to the accomplishment of this task.

FOOTNOTES

1. S.A. Sirotinskiy, "Put' Arseniya. Biograficheskiy ocherk o M.V. Frunze" [Arseniy' Path: A Biographical Sketch of M.V. Frunze], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1959, pp 126-127.
2. M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch." [Collected Works], Vol III, Moscow-Leningrad, Gosudarstvennoye izd-vo, 1927, pp 201, 202.
3. M.V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Vol II, Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1957, p 161.
4. M.V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch.," Vol III, p 287.
5. V.I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch." [Complete Collected Works], Vol 36, p 325.
6. Lenin, op. cit., Vol 42, p 77.
7. Lenin, op. cit., Vol 23, p 68.
8. V.G. Belinskiy, "Sobr. soch." [Collected Works], Vol III, Moscow, Association of State Publishing Houses, Gosudarstvennoye izd-vo khudozhestvennoy literatury, 1948, pp 798-799.
9. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Memories and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1969, p 98.
10. V.A. Sukhomlinsky, "O vospitanii" [On Indoctrination], Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, p 14.

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MILITARY HISTORY

ATHEISTIC WORK IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 84 (signed to press 28 Nov 84) pp 44-48

[Article by Lt Col A. Pavlov, candidate of philosophy: "V.I. Lenin and the CPSU on the Atheistic Indoctrination of the Workers and Fightingmen of the Soviet Armed Forces"]

[Excerpts] In the situation of perfecting developed socialism, the party is devoting a great deal of attention to the shaping of a communist world outlook in the Soviet people and in the fightingmen of the Armed Forces. Atheistic indoctrination is highly important in this matter, since religious views and superstitions are hindering the establishment of communist ideals in the minds of a certain segment of the workers. The June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee underscored the following: "We must also not relax our work with the believers, a specific group of the population. A part of the people are still under the influence of religion...."¹

V.I. Lenin's criticism of opportunistic views on religion has not lost its acuity today. This is due to the fact that contemporary revisionists are doing everything possible to disguise the reactionary essence of religion and its linkage with the ideology of the exploitative classes, and are attempting to rehash the Marxist definition of religion as "opium for the people" in their own manner. Furthermore, they call for consideration of the "achievements" of religion, the essence and the social role of which, they would have us believe, have undergone a fundamental change.

Appealing to "common sense" and claiming that religion has existed throughout almost the entire history of man, the church-goers persistently spread the thesis about its positive role, which they perceive primarily in man's moral improvement. The falseness of such thinking is obvious. It has been convincingly demonstrated by the experience of building socialism in the USSR and other nations of the socialist commonwealth.

Imperialism's aggressive circles see religion as a tool for combatting communist ideology. "Numerous ideological centers of imperialism," Comrade K.U. Chernenko stated at the June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, "are attempting not just to maintain religiosity, but to implant it and give it an anti-Soviet, nationalistic direction. They especially count on the religious extremists. At the same time, fabrications about 'violations of freedom of conscience in the USSR' are being spread."⁹

The Communist Party implements its policy on the matter of religion in inseparable linkage with the accomplishment of the tasks involved in building the new society and follow the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, which outlines a clear and precise program of scientific-atheistic indoctrination of the workers.

Even during the first years of Soviet power, questions pertaining to the atheistic indoctrination of the people and the ideological struggle against religion were discussed at plenums of the Central Committee and at party congresses. The 1921 Plenum of the RKP (b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] demanded that every communist engage in militant and aggressive anti-religious propaganda and active cultural and educational work with the believers.

Religious associations, churches and houses of prayer have gradually halted their activities in the nation as a result of the social and economic reforms and the purposeful work performed by party and soviet organs to disseminate the militaristic world outlook among the workers. When the building of socialism had been completed, the vast majority of Soviet people had gone over to atheistic positions.

V.I. Lenin's ideas on freedom of conscience have now been made a reality. They are reflected in our state's Fundamental Law. "Citizens of the USSR," article 52 of the Constitution of the USSR states, "are guaranteed freedom of conscience--that is, the right to profess any religion or to profess none at all, to be active in religious cults or to engage in atheistic propaganda. It is forbidden to incite hostility or hatred because of religious beliefs."

"The church in the USSR is separated from the state, and the school is separated from the church."¹⁰

Atheistic propaganda among the personnel of our Armed Forces, an inseparable part of the socialist society, is highly important. The strength of the Soviet Army lies not just in the fact that it possesses the most modern weapons, but also in the high level of ideological conviction of its fightingman, in their devotion to the homeland, the Communist Party and the Soviet government, in their aware fulfillment of their duties.

A specific system for exerting a scientific-atheistic influence upon the minds of the fightingmen has developed in the Armed Forces. It is closely linked with the political, moral and military indoctrination. Scientific-atheistic propaganda is organized in the military unit and on the ship by the commander or his deputy for political affairs, together with the party and Komsomol organizations.

Diverse forms, methods and means are used for the atheistic indoctrination of the fightingmen. The army and navy use lectures, reports, evenings of discussion on special subjects, filmed lectures on atheistic subjects, talks, trips to museums of history and special area museums and planetariums, competitions, quizzes, radio journals and so forth. Great importance is attached to individual work with believers and those who are vacillating. This is a complex matter and it requires considerable time, patience and tact. It involves first of all a thorough study of the fightingmen and the identification of those who have been subjected to the influence of religious prejudices and superstitions.

Conviction is the main method used for influencing believers. "Communists," materials from the June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee state, "are consistent atheists, but they do not impose their philosophy upon anyone. Our method is education, conviction and propaganda."⁴ This calls for proof, for a scientific basis for any tenant advanced by the propagandist.

On the basis of decisions coming out of the 26th party congress and decrees passed by the CPSU Central Committee on ideological matters, commanders and political workers in the Armed Forces persistently strive to reveal in a thorough and well-reasoned manner the reactionary essence of religion, all of its directions and trends, and attempts by church-goers and members of religious sects to influence the spiritual life of servicemen in the army and navy, to tear them away from their work and put an ideology and morals alien to us in their minds. This makes necessary a scientific explanation of questions the answers to which believers try to find in religion. "...The masses," V.I. Lenin wrote, "must be given the most diversified material on atheistic propaganda; they must be acquainted with facts from the most diverse areas of life; they must be approached in whatever way is necessary to gain their interests; they must be aroused from their religious slumber, agitated from the most diverse directions and by the most diverse methods, and so forth."⁵

The propagandizing of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, which reveals the scientific nature and the moral values of atheism, the exposure of religious-philosophical and theological concepts on problems of war and peace, demonstration of the harmful influence of religion on the performance of one's military duty and the further enhancement of combat readiness, and so forth, are particularly important in the atheistic indoctrination of fightingmen in the army and navy.

Many interesting and instructive atheistic measures are applied in the units, on the ships and in subunits of the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Technical propaganda means (movie and radio equipment, magnetic tape recorders and others) are being increasingly used in the atheistic indoctrination of the servicemen. This raises the interest of the students and lends convincingness to the talks by activists in atheistic propaganda.

Unquestionably, the atheistic influence is focused primarily on the believers. Atheistic indoctrinal work is not performed just with religious people alone, however, but with all the fightingmen, especially those who have not become aware and convinced atheists.

Some officers believe that the atheist indoctrination should be handled by specially trained people--scientists, instructors, lecturers and propagandists, for example. This group of people unquestionably has the leading role in the system of atheist indoctrination. The USSR Minister of Defense and the chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy demand that plans be made for specializing the best trained lecturers and propagandists in anti-religious subjects and that they be trained to debate the most acute issues of atheist propaganda and taught the skills needed to perform indoctrinal work with the believers. There is no basis for assuming that all of the tasks involved in shaping atheist conviction in the individual can be successfully accomplished with their help alone, however. "It was stated at the June...

1983 Plenum of CPSU Central Committee that "we must... proceed from the premise that the shaping of the consciousness of the communists and all the citizens in our socialist society is not a matter for the professional ideologists, propagandists and workers in the mass media alone. This is a job for the entire party."⁶ Atheistic work is therefore a matter for all the communists in the army and navy. The task can certainly be accomplished, however. We have some positive experience in training organizers of atheistic indoctrination. Its study, summarization and use in the practical work performed with the fightingmen is producing good results.

Atheistic propaganda measures are carried out as part of the system of measures aimed at shaping a scientific outlook and communist conviction in the fighting-men, organizing their leisure time, developing amateur artistic activities and improving the mass sports work. A wholesome atmosphere in the military collective, regulation relations between chiefs and those under them, between superiors and underlings, the development of criticism and self-criticism and the involvement of the personnel in active public work have a great deal to do with the results of the atheistic propaganda in a military collective.

The overcoming of religious prejudices is a natural part of the development of a communist social and economic structure. Experience has convincingly shown that the further we advance on the path of social progress, the more apparent become the groundlessness of the religious way of thinking and acting and its incompatibility with the socialist way of life.

Precisely planned, purposeful and differentiated atheistic indoctrination work conducted at all levels has a decisive role with respect to totally eliminating religious relics in our nation.

The fulfillment of V.I. Lenin's instructions and of decisions coming out of the 26th Party Congress and the June and December (1983), February and April (1984) Plenums of the CPSU Central Committee is an extremely important condition for the creation of a society completely free of religion.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS, 14-15 iyunya 1983 goda" [Materials of the 14-15 June 1983 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee], Moscow, Politizdat, 1983, p 60.
2. "Materialy..." op. cit., p 60.
3. "Konstitutsiya (Osnovnoy Zakon) Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik" [The Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics], Moscow, Politizdat, 1977, p 22.
4. "Materialy..." op. cit., p 60.
5. V.I. Lenin, "Poln. sobr. soch." [Complete Collected Works], Vol 45, p 26.
6. "Materialy..." op. cit., p 6.

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MILITARY HISTORY

CRITIQUE OF WESTERN WRITING ON 1944 SOVIET-GERMAN FRONT

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 12, Dec 84 (signed to press 28 Nov 84) pp 67-74

[Article by Col A. Yakushevskiy, candidate of historical sciences: "A Critique of Bourgeois Historiography of Events of 1944 on the Soviet-German Front"]

[Text] The operations carried out by Soviet forces in 1944 form a glorious page in the history of the Great Patriotic War. During the winter, summer and fall campaign of 1944, the Soviet Armed Forces completely destroyed or captured 126 divisions and 30 brigades of enemy troops. The Wehrmacht lost 2.6 million soldiers and officers.¹ The bold and decisive operations of our forces at Leningrad, in the Right-Bank Ukraine, in Belorussia, Moldavia and the Baltic area resulted in the total liberation of Soviet land. The further development of offensive operations by the Soviet Armed Forces resulted in fascist Germany's total political isolation in Europe. In the performance of its historic liberation mission, the Soviet Army provided fraternal assistance to the peoples of Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in the struggle to rid themselves of the cruel fascist tyranny. The successes achieved by Soviet forces in the Balkans forced the Hitlerite occupiers to abandon Greece and Albania.

Subsequent offensive operations by the Armed Forces of the USSR in 1944, which grew into a general strategic offensive on the enormous Soviet-German front, created advantageous conditions for active operations by Anglo-American forces in the Mediterranean and Western European theaters of military operations.

The large victories won by the Armed Forces of the USSR in 1944 demonstrated the invincibility and the enormous possibilities of the socialist social and state structure to the entire world once more. They were the result of thorough organizational and political work by the Communist Party and of the heroic efforts of the Soviet people and their fightingmen. These victories helped to enhance the Soviet Union's prestige and influence in the international arena.

Recently, however, bourgeois reactionary historians in the West have been making a considerable effort to distort the truth about the feat of worldwide historical significance accomplished by the Soviet people and their Armed Forces and to belittle the Soviet Union's role in the defeat of fascism. A biased, distorted depiction of the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front in 1944 is typical of the vast majority of bourgeois writers on the events of World War II. Even those

works which note the successes of Soviet forces have to downplay in one way or another the victories won by the Armed Forces of the USSR in 1944 and to indicate certain "shady aspects" of the actions of Soviet troops and their command element. They provide a certain amount of objectivity to make it appear to the readers that they are impartial researchers. They focus their main effort on distorting the reality, however, ordinarily selecting subtle and insidious devices for this purpose.

This is extremely clear in the book "Great Battles on the Eastern Front: The Soviet-German War, 1941-1945" by T. Dupuy and P. Martell. Unlike other bourgeois historians, they have made significant progress, being the first to publish a book covering the Soviet Army's largest operations in the Great Patriotic War. Five of 16 offensive operations by Soviet forces described in the book were conducted in 1944 (the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy, Crimean, Belorussian, Lvov-Sandomierz and Iasi-Kishinev operations).² There is a map and from 8 to 13 tables for each of the operations.

Everything positive in the work by Dupuy and Martell on the Soviet Army's largest operations in the Great Patriotic War are nullified by the authors' opinions on the factors producing the USSR's victory over fascist Germany. In the introduction to the book they stress primarily the "amazing military skill" of the German fascist forces, which, they would have us believe, has no equal in history. And while the Soviet Union was able to win despite this "great military art" of the Germans, the book states, the main reason was its enormous superiority in troop strength and the size of the territory, its ability to set up "large-scale production of simple weapons models" and the weather, which, they say, "aided the Red Army."³

In order somehow to substantiate the invalid thesis about the Soviet Union's "inexhaustible human resources," the book compares the sizes of the populations of the USSR and Germany just prior to the war. The authors do not in any way consider the allies of the latter, which sent their forces to fight against the USSR. Nor do they take into account the Hitlerite Reich's use of the labor resources and raw materials of the European nations occupied by the fascists.⁴

In a number of cases, the tables compiled by the authors also helped to downplay Soviet military art in the book by Dupuy and Martell. They frequently compare the number of divisions on both sides, but do not point out that the German divisions had a great superiority over the Soviet divisions in numerical strength. The uninformed reader might therefore unwittingly conclude that there were always considerably more Soviet than German fascist troops, even during the first period of the Great Patriotic War.⁵

Like Dupuy and Martell, British Colonel (Ret) A. Seaton has a great deal of positive comment on the operations carried out by Soviet forces in 1944 in his latest book: "The Fall of Fortress Europe, 1943-1945." "The three-week offensive operation 'Bagration,'" he writes, "was unquestionably one of the greatest victories of the entire war, and that victory, suffered by Germany during the summer and near its borders, was more catastrophic for Germany than the defeat at Stalingrad."⁶ Seaton also points out the success of the Lvov-Sandomierz and Iasy-Kishinev operations.

He cannot refrain from using various subterfuges, however, the objective of which is to belittle the indisputable successes achieved by the Soviet Armed Forces in 1944. He attributes the great mobility of Soviet forces during the Lvov-Sandomierz and other operations entirely to deliveries of American motor vehicles to the USSR under the Lend Lease Act. Without those shipments, Seaton maintains, the Soviet Army could not have surpassed the Wehrmacht in mobility. Seaton attributes the encirclement and destruction of the large German fascist grouping at Iasi and Kishinev primarily to errors made by Hitler in directing the Southern Ukraine Army Group.⁷

An analysis of these two books, as well as other works published in the past decade by Western authors, graphically shows that, along with a certain recognition of the Soviet Army's achievements during the last years of the war with fascist Germany, bourgeois historiography continues to falsify the results of military operations on the Soviet-German front in 1944 in an attempt to reduce the impression made on world public opinion by the remarkable successes achieved by the Armed Forces of the USSR during the year of decisive victories over fascism.

We can single out certain basic methods and directions used in bourgeois historiography for falsifying the events of 1944: In the first place, there is a one-sided, tendentious approach to describing the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front; in the second place, there is an attempt to belittle Soviet military art, to attribute the victories achieved by the Armed Forces of the USSR to chance, transient factors; and in the third place, the operations of Anglo-American forces are eulogized and attempts are made to attribute to them the crucial role in the concluding phases of World War II.

As a rule, most of the works published in the West describe only the condition, the plans and actions of the German-fascist forces and the Hitlerite generals in detail and with obvious sympathy. The successful operations of individual formations, units and even subunits of the Wehrmacht, and their military skill are discussed in detail. Only a passing account is given of the operations of Soviet forces, and the specific features of their military art are not described. All of this results in a deliberate distortion of the overall picture of the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front.

A one-sided approach to the describing of the events of 1944 is especially typical of the works of West German historians, particularly those who served in the Hitlerite Wehrmacht. A typical example of this is the book by R. Hinze, "The Collapse of Army Group Center in the East in 1944," published in the FRG in 1980.

The one-sided, biased treatment of the Belorussian Operation leaves the readers in ignorance about the operations of Soviet forces and the measures taken by their command element. They perceive the defeat of Army Group Center as resulting only from a shortage of personnel and equipment on the part of the German command element, and not the superiority of Soviet forces in military art. The fact that the book's author also includes many episodes demonstrating "skillful actions" by Hitlerite forces in the "exceptionally difficult" situation which had developed for them has also contributed to the shaping of this view on the course of events in the summer of 1944.⁸

The book "Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East" by American Professor E. Ziemke is also distinguished by an obvious attempt to undeservedly elevate the military art of the Hitlerite forces during the last years of the war, when they were suffering continuous defeats. The author describes counter-strikes by German tank groups on the flanks of Soviet forces which advanced to the north in the area of Nyiregyhaza in October 1944 in unusual detail, for example. "That maneuver," Ziemke states, "was carried out with the sensitivity and precision of the days of Blitzkrieg warfare."⁹ Praises are sung to the German command element for that maneuver despite the fact that the Debrecen operation conducted by the Soviet Army on that sector of the front at that time was successfully accomplished on the whole, and the abandoning of Nyiregyhaza in the interest of the overall success was a temporary development. Like Ziemke, A. Seaton deals extensively with the counterstrikes made by the German fascist forces in 1944 in his book: "The Russo-German War 1945-45."¹⁰

It should be pointed out that there was nothing exceptional in the German counter-attacks. The Wehrmacht continued to be a powerful enemy in 1944 and had everything necessary for conducting a determined defense on the Soviet-German front. The German fascist troops were led by experienced commanders. The brief counter-thrusts which they organized against the successfully advancing Soviet forces were the most expedient method of action in a situation in which breaches by the Soviet Army had deprived the Germans of a solid defensive front. Troops transferred from Western Europe, from Germany itself and from other sectors of the Soviet-German front were deployed at rear lines under the cover of those thrusts. Such counterthrusts certainly do not indicate that the German fascist military art was superior to Soviet military art, however, as maintained by certain bourgeois historians. "Unlike the first period of the war," Marshall of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov stated, "the German command had become somehow slow-witted and deprived of inventiveness, especially in a difficult situation. In its decisions one sensed a lack of correct assessment of the capabilities of their own forces and those of the enemy. The German command was very frequently late in taking its groupings out of danger of flank attacks and encirclement, thereby placing its forces into a desperate situation."¹¹

The tendentiousness and one-sided nature of the approach taken by bourgeois writers in describing the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front in 1944 is also manifested in a striving to focus the reader's attention on individual unsuccessful operations of the Soviet forces, while mentioning only in passing the successful operations carried out by the Armed Forces of the USSR. This is typical of the book by American historian and writer H. Salisbury, "The Unknown War," published in 1978. It contains only one small paragraph on the Soviet Army's summer-fall campaign of 1944 and five paragraphs (less than one page) on the Belorussian Operation. Three pages deal with the events of 1944, and two of them tell about the Polish Uprising instigated by Poland's reactionary underground under instructions from the Polish immigrant government. At the same time, the author devoted almost half of the entire book to the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front in June-November 1941, when Soviet forces were suffering temporary defeats. It is therefore clearly apparent that Salisbury is tendentious, that he explains only those events which, in his opinion, describe the functioning of the Soviet Armed Forces and their command element in a negative light.¹²

In an attempt to belittle the achievements of Soviet military art in 1944, many bourgeois historians attribute to the Soviet command, excessive caution and indecisiveness in conducting combat operations and the inability to take advantage of opportunities arising for destroying the enemy. G. Stephenson of England, for example, maintains that "the Red Army conducted the offensive cautiously, without speed," and that this was also true of the "final campaigns" of the war.¹³ In the words of American historian E. MacCarty, one of the authors of the book, "The Russian Front: Germany's War in the East, 1941-1945," in the Belorussian Operation in the summer of 1944, Soviet forces ostensibly "acted with inadequate boldness," advanced "directly on the German positions" and did not use "refined and inventive" forms of combat operations. E. Ziemke asserts that "the Soviet military strategy was restrained and was defensive on the psychological level."¹⁴

All such assertions are biased and do not at all reflect the objective reality. Bourgeois writers are frequently inclined to see excessive caution and restraint on the part of the Soviet command wherever it departed from standards developed in the past and made bold and unusual decisions in keeping with the situation. "With respect to the ability to fight," Marshall of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov wrote, "I must say with complete responsibility that during the war, the Soviet command worked out the most advanced methods of preparing for and conducting large strategic operations, and commanders at all levels completely mastered the operational art and tactics of combat."¹⁵

The concept of the Wehrmacht's "accidental" defeat on the Soviet-German front, which has long been disseminated in the West, serves to downplay the remarkable achievements of the Soviet Armed Forces in 1944. The version about Hitler's mistakes and operational-strategic miscalculations made by him, which allegedly were the main cause of the failures suffered by the German fascist forces also in the last years of the war, occupies a central spot in that concept. Not one of the bourgeois authors writing about the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front in 1944 can refrain from referring to Hitler's shortsightedness and errors. The aforementioned R. Hinze holds Hitler "totally responsible" for the collapse of Army Group Center in the summer of 1944. He writes that the commanders of the armies making up Army Group Center repeatedly suggested reducing the front line, making it possible to reinforce the German defense in the East. The Wehrmacht's high command rejected all such suggestions, however, and directed them only to carry out Hitler's order "to hold the positions occupied."¹⁶

Manchester University Professor J. Bradley of England links the defeats suffered by the German fascist army in the Right-Bank Ukraine and in Romania with Hitler's removal of Field Marshall Manstein from the command of Army Group South in March of 1944. West German historian I. Engelman adheres to the same point of view in the book: "Manstein: Strategists and Military Leader."¹⁷ British historian B. Liddell Hart maintains that the main cause of all the Germans' defeats on the Soviet-German front in 1944 was Hitler's "rigid defense principle," which ostensibly stifled initiative in the army group commanders and did not permit them to execute a flexible and mobile defense.¹⁸

In the bourgeois historical literature one also encounters other accusations leveled against Hitler. There is a measure of truth in those accusations. A dilettante in operational and strategic matters, Hitler was indeed unable to

provide proper direction of the military operations. Like the generals under him, he made many blunders, especially during the last 2 years of the war. The main causes of the defeat suffered by the German fascist forces cannot be reduced to a matter of subjective factors, however. The causes lie deeper than that. A great deal had changed on the Soviet-German front in 1944, compared with the preceding years of the war. The Armed Forces of the USSR had made an enormous advance quantitatively and especially, qualitatively. The striking and fire power of the troops had grown, their maneuverability had increased, and control had been improved.

When the German fascist command encountered the increased strength and skill of the Soviet forces, it clung to obsolete methods of strategic leadership and was unable to re-organize, which was evidence of its crisis.

Nor can the assertions of a number of bourgeois historians that the Wehrmacht's defeat on the Soviet-German front was due to the fact that the Germans were not treated honorably by their allies in the fascist bloc be regarded as substantiated. T. Gosztony of Switzerland and A. Seaton of Britain, for example, state that the main cause of the defeat of Army Group Southern Ukraine in August of 1944 was not the well-prepared and skillfully executed Iasi-Kishinev operation, but "betrayal by the Romanians," a "Soviet-Romanian conspiracy."¹⁹ The real course of events refutes those conjectures. The resistance by both Romanian and German forces on the sector of the 3rd Ukrainian Front's assault grouping was totally broken during the first 2 days of the Soviet offensive. On 23 August the Romanian Antonescu Government was still calling for "mobilization of all the nation's forces" to continue the war. One thing is indisputable: The powerful thrusts by the Soviet Army at Iasi and Kishinev hastened the uprising by Romania's workers and created advantageous conditions for a victory for the democratic forces.

One of the new trends in bourgeois historiography is an attempt by certain writers to prove that the Armed Forces of the USSR were weaker in 1944 than they were in 1943. This thesis was advanced by American historian W. Dann in his book: "Second Front Now--1943."²⁰ He concludes in the book that in the absence of a second front in Europe, the Soviet Army had suffered very large losses in engagements with fascist Germany's main forces in 1943, which had weakened it. "I suggest," Dann states, "that the Red Army was stronger in many respects in 1943 than in 1944. The difficult and exhausting battles it had conducted since July of 1943 had cost it dearly. The weakening of the Red Army permitted Hitler to transfer his troops to the West."²¹

This conclusion does not conform to the reality but only confirms the versions of those reactionary historians who state that following the Normandy landing, operations by forces of the Western allies began to have the main role in the armed conflict against fascist Germany. Since the Soviet Army was weaker in 1944, in their opinion, it was no longer able to make the main contribution to the victory over the common enemy.

The actual status of the Armed Forces of the USSR in 1944, the victories they won that year and the distribution of the German fascist forces between the West and East completely refute Dann's conjectures. The numerical strength of the Soviet Armed Forces was growing in 1944, the quantity of combat equipment was increasing,

and the military skill of the Soviet forces was improving. Suffice it to say that while the numerical strength of the field army was 6.35 million at the end of 1943, it had reached 6.7 million in December of 1944. The number of tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces in the ground forces of the field army had increased by 125.5 percent as of 31 December 1944, compared with the end of 1943, the number of guns and mortars had increased by 12.8 percent, and the number of sub-machine guns by 31.4 percent. The striking power of the Soviet Air Forces also continued to grow. New ships, aircraft, coastal and antiaircraft defense weapons were added to the Naval Forces of the USSR in 1944.²²

There were no transfers of German fascist forces from the East to the West to reinforce the defense of the Atlantic Coast in 1944. Contrary to W. Dann's assertion, the Hitlerites were forced to reinforce their forces on the Soviet-German front also following the Allied Invasion of Normandy.

The events of 1944 take up around one-fifth of the entire voluminous "World War II Almanac: 1941-1945," which was prepared by British historian R. Coralski and published in London in 1981. The Soviet Army's operations become lost among them like a needle in a haystack, however. Of 84 illustrations dealing with 1944, there is not a single one which pertains to the Soviet Union or its Armed Forces. All six diagrams and tables pertaining to that year have to do with operations of the Anglo-American forces in Western Europe. A great of attention is also devoted to the war in Italy, in the Pacific and Far East theaters, and to the bombing of Germany by aircraft of the Western allies. When the author attempts to briefly discuss events on the Soviet-German front, he grossly distorts the facts either deliberately or out of ignorance.²³

"The Historical Encyclopedia of World War II," written by well-known French, West German, British and Belgian historians and published in 1981 in the English and French languages, there is not a single article dealing with Soviet Army operations in 1944. In general, the authors of this encyclopedia totally ignored battles on the Soviet-German front, even such battles as the battles of Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk, which had a crucial effect on the course and the outcome of the entire World War II. The contribution made by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces to the defeat of fascism and militarism is described in a brief article with the title "The USSR--The War With Germany," which is equal in size to the article on the landing of American forces on Leyte Island in the fall of 1944.²⁴ This graphically demonstrates the tendency to downplay the role of the armed conflict on the Soviet-German front and to exaggerate the importance of operations by Anglo-American forces. Bourgeois historians of the FRG give greater coverage to the events of 1944 on the Soviet-German front than do the American and British scholars, but even they hold to a version which says that after the invasion of France by Allied Forces, the focal point of the battle against fascist Germany was transferred from the East to the West. Colonel P. Ruckbrodt of the West German Bundeswehr, for example, states that "the battle at Normandy was of exceptional importance to the outcome of the war."²⁵ According to W. Kuhn of the FRG, the invasion of France "fundamentally altered the course of the war." In the books by West German historian Ja. Piekalkiewicz, "The Tank War, 1939-1945," and "Invasion," published in 1979-1981, he holds to the same point of view.²⁶

The distribution of fascist Germany's forces between the West and the East after 5 June 1944 convincingly refutes this knowingly falsified position. At the

beginning of June 1944, the Soviet Army was opposed by 4.3 million enemy troops, while the Western Allies (in France, Belgium, Holland and Italy) were opposed by only around 1 million men.²⁷ During the second half of 1944, the Soviet Army destroyed or captured 96 divisions and 24 brigades, and defeated 219 divisions and 22 brigades of enemy forces. The Western Allies destroyed a total of 35 enemy divisions in the European theater of military operations during that time.²⁸

And so, the efforts of bourgeois historiography, especially of late, are aimed at deliberately distorting the truth about the outstanding victories gained by the Soviet Armed Forces in 1944, as a result of which not only was Soviet land and the territory of a number of other nations enslaved by fascism totally liberated, but the military-political and strategic prerequisites were also created for the final defeat of Hitlerite Germany. Reactionary historians in the West are making a considerable effort to belittle the combat skill of Soviet Army personnel, to conceal the real causes of the Hitlerite Wehrmacht's defeat, to exaggerate the merits of the Western Allies in the achievement of victory over fascism, thereby weakening the international prestige of the Socialist Soviet State and justifying the aggressive essence of imperialism.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II, 1939-1945], Vol 8, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 467; Vol 9, 1978, p 531.
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3. Ibid., pp 2-4.
4. Ibid., pp 2-5.
5. Ibid., pp 39-44, 55-57, 71-72.
6. A. Seaton, "The Fall of Fortress Europe, 1943-1945", London, 1981, p 136.
7. Ibid., pp 97, 138, 150.
8. R. Hinze, "Der Zusammenbruch der Heeresgruppe Mitte im Osten 1944" [The Collapse of Army Group Center in the East, 1944], Stuttgart, 1980, pp 152-164.
9. E. Ziemke, "Stalingrad to Berlin: The German Defeat in the East", Washington, 1968, p 364.
10. A. Seaton, "The Russo-German War 1945-45", London, 1941 [sic], pp 416-438.
11. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Memories and Reflections], Vol 2, 3rd edition, Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 1978, p 207.
12. H. Salisbury, "The Unknown War," London, 1978, pp 1-98, 171-174.
13. G. Stephenson, "Russia from 1812 to 1945: A History," New York, 1970, pp 431-433.

14. "The Russian Front: Germany's War in the East, 1941-1945," London, 1978, p 57; E. Ziemke, "Stalingrad..." op. cit., p 504.
15. KOMMUNIST, No 1, 1970, p 94.
16. R. Hinze, "Der Zusammenbruch..." op. cit., pp 267-274.
17. "The Rand McNally Encyclopedia of World War II," Chicago, 1977, p 163; J. Engelmann, "Manstein: Strateg und Gruppenfuhrer" [Manstein: Strategist and Military Leader], Fridberg [sic], S.A., pp 142-147.
18. B. Liddell Hart, "History of the Second World War," New York, 1971, p 583.
19. P. Gosztony, "Endkampf an der Donau: 1944/45" [Final Battle on the Danube], Vienna, 1969, p 19; A. Seaton, "The Russo-Russian German..." op. cit., pp 475-476.
20. W. Dann, "Second Front Now--1943," Alabama, 1980, pp 1-8, 268.
21. W. Dann, "Second..." op. cit., pp 256-265; Idem., "Letter to Moscow," 14 October 1983, p 1.
22. "Istoriya..." op. cit., Vol 8, p 16; Vol 9, pp 499-505; "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [Fifty Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1968, pp 391-392.
23. R. Coralski, "World War II Almanac: 1941-1945. A Political and Military Record," London, 1981, pp 299-368.
24. "The Historical Encyclopedia of World War II," London, 1981, pp 299-304, 479-484.
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MILITARY HISTORY

USE OF ROCKET ARTILLERY IN FORCING WATER OBSTACLES

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[Article by Lt Col A. Manachinskiy, Col (Ret) Ye. Pronkin and Col (Ret) I. Fesenko: "The Use of Rocket Artillery During the Forcing of Water Barriers in the Third Period of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] There was not a single large offensive operation in the Great Patriotic War in which our forces did not have to force rivers. Water barriers up to 100 meters wide encountered every 40-60 kilometers, up to 200 meters--every 100-150 kilometers, and 300 meters wide or more--every 250-300 kilometers.¹

The forcing of rivers, especially large ones, was one of the most difficult types of combat activity. It was almost always done in a situation of highly vigorous enemy counteraction, especially by aircraft, since the forced concentration of troops at forcing lines (sectors) and crossing points made them most vulnerable to air strikes. In March of 1944, for example, more than 1,000 sorties were made by enemy aircraft against crossings on the Southern Bug and Dnestr. Enemy aircraft made more than 2400 sorties against crossings on the Oder in the 5th Assault Army's zone in the first part of February 1945 alone.²

During the forcing of water barriers, the air defense missions consisted in protecting troops concentrated in the crossing area and protecting them during the capture of bridgeheads and the development of the offensive on the opposite bank, against air strikes, as well as in covering the crossings and crossing equipment.

A study of front operations conducted during the third period of the war shows that air defense for troops forcing a water barrier from the march was ordinarily arranged by that grouping of air defense forces and equipment which had covered the advancing troops prior to approaching the water barrier. The front commander attempted to employ air defense personnel and equipment in mass for covering the main groupings of forces and the most important crossings. By 13 August 1944, for example, five antiaircraft artillery divisions were concentrated in the area of the Magnusew Bridgehead on the Vysla. This made it possible to create a density of 14.7 guns per kilometer on a 24-kilometer front (see diagram page 62).³

The experience of front operations in the third period of the war demonstrated that reliable coverage was achieved for troops, crossings and crossing equipment

during the forcing of water barriers by setting up a target or a target-zone air defense system, by making the fullest possible use of the combat capabilities of the antiaircraft weapons, and by moving antiaircraft artillery formations and units to the forcing areas in advance of the main forces.

The grouping of antiaircraft weapons had to conform to the front commander's plan for the forcing of the water barrier by the troops; provide reliable cover for the troops on the starting bank, during the forcing of the water barrier and during combat operations on the opposite bank; destroy the airborne enemy on the distant approaches to the forcing sectors and crossings; and build up the fire power against enemy aircraft as they approached their targets.

Composite front and army antiaircraft artillery groups were created for purposes of providing the most effective coverage for the main forces during the forcing of a river. Their organization included the following: the creation of zones of massed fire on the approaches to the crossings and to bridges, providing the required fire density for directions and altitude ranges and with mutual coverage of the antiaircraft artillery fire positions; coordination of fire with the operations of the front's fighter aircraft with respect to directions and altitudes; maneuvering by antiaircraft artillery units and formations for purposes of reinforcing the coverage of troops engaged in combat operations on the opposite bank and of crossings and bridges subjected to the most intensive action by enemy aircraft, and for restoring or building up the fire system.

While the forces were advancing toward the river, the small-caliber antiaircraft artillery and antiaircraft machine guns were distributed among the columns, covering them as they traveled and repelling enemy air raids during brief halts, while part of the medium-caliber antiaircraft artillery advanced toward the river in independent columns or were used for protecting the troops against air strikes while they were passing through open areas.

At the river itself, small-caliber antiaircraft artillery subunits occupied fire positions no more than 0.5-1 kilometer from the waterline or immediately next to bridges and crossings. Medium-caliber batteries occupied positions up to 1-2 kilometers from the river on the starting bank. This distance was reduced in individual cases for purposes of covering the crossing units without shifting fire positions.

After the forward detachments had captured bridgeheads, part of the air defense personnel and equipment crossed over to the opposite bank with the mission of covering troops engaged in combat operations and destroying the airborne enemy on the distant approaches to the crossings. Following the forward detachment which had captured a bridgehead, antiaircraft machine gun companies were ordinarily sent across, followed by small-caliber antiaircraft artillery batteries on ferries and ponton bridges and finally, by medium-caliber batteries over the bridges which had been set up. Part of the air defense personnel and weapons (mainly medium-caliber) remained on the starting bank and covered the second echelons of advancing troops and reserves as they crossed the barrier, as well as the crossings themselves. As the troops were consolidated and passed through, they then crossed over to the bridgehead in batteries.⁴

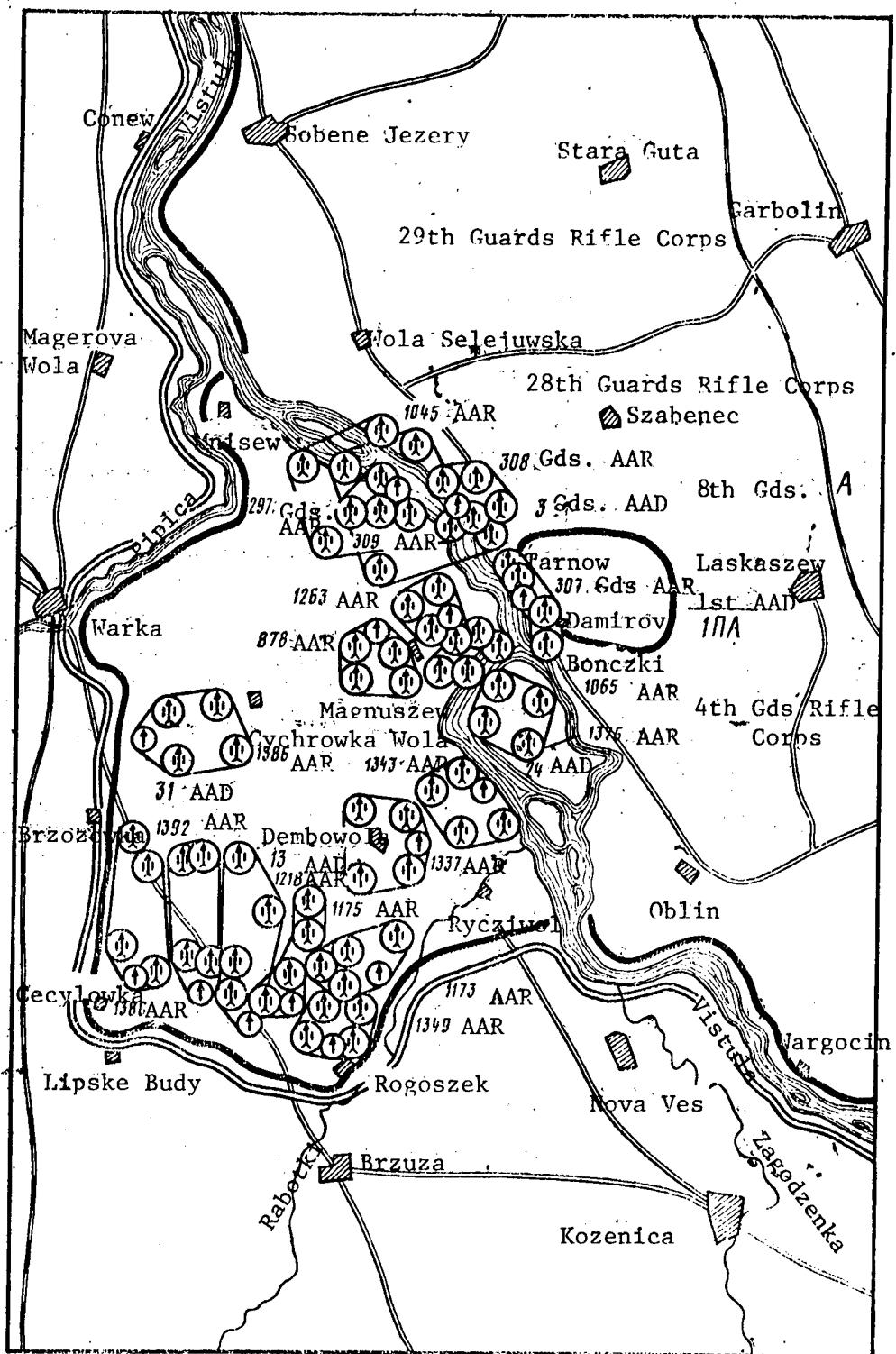


Diagram 1. The Covering of the Magnuszew Bridgehead and the Vistula Crossings by Antiaircraft Artillery of the 1st Belorussian Front in August of 1944

The large-scale maneuvering of air defense personnel and weapons for purposes of decisively reinforcing the coverage of forces performing the main missions was one of the absolute conditions for achieving the most effective air defense for front troops during the forcing of rivers. At instructions from Headquarters, for example, the commander of the Central Air Defense Front transferred the 75th Antiaircraft Artillery Division and several separate units from the Special Moscow Air Defense Army to reinforce air defense forces in the areas of crossings on the Vysla and the Magnusew bridgehead. The front's antiaircraft artillery group thus numbered around 300 antiaircraft guns, 136 antiaircraft machine guns and more than 50 antiaircraft searchlights by mid-January 1945.⁵

The need to cover troops and crossings against air strikes on several rivers simultaneously necessitated extensive use of the fighter aviation, which was the most important means of covering troops during the forcing of water barriers. With smoothly organized guidance, its maneuverability made it possible to reliably cover the troops, crossings and crossing equipment. The most effective method was patrolling by the fighters in designated areas (zones) above their forces or on the approaches to the battlefield. This method required the use of a large quantity of fighters, to be sure. Two or three patrol groups were ordinarily designated for each area (or zone) 10-12 kilometers on the front and in depth, with each group consisting of from two aircraft up to a squadron or more. Three zones of action were designated for our covering fighter aviation for purposes of covering troops and crossings on the Oder in the Berlin Operation conducted by the first Belorussian Front, for example: "fighter-hunters, fighter patrols on the approaches to the battlefield, and fighter patrols immediately over the battle formations of the advancing troops."⁶

Success in the air defense of troops and crossings depended upon thoroughly organized interaction between the fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery, which was ordinarily based on the following distribution of zones of combat operations: The fighters attacked enemy aircraft primarily on the distant approaches to water barriers, while the antiaircraft artillery destroyed the airborne enemy on the immediate approaches, as well as directly over the troops and crossings.

The command elements of the fronts gave special attention to protecting captured or erected crossings against air strikes, since they were one of the main targets for enemy aircraft, and the enemy employed a great diversity of weapons. Cruise missiles were employed for the first time in February of 1945, for example. They were launched from altitudes of 2500-3000 meters by bomber crews against crossings on the Oder in the area of Geritz.

Up to a certain point in time the front's fighter aircraft and antiaircraft artillery provided air defense for stationary crossings and important bridges in the rear area. When the fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery of the National Air Defense Forces arrived, they were assigned this mission, while the organic antiaircraft formations and units, as well as the front fighter aviation were reassigned to cover forces developing the success on the opposite bank or engaged in combat operations at the bridgehead. During the Vysla Oder operation, for example, air defense was provided for crossings on the Vysla, first by the fighter and antiaircraft artillery formations of the fronts, which were then

replaced in the zone of the 1st Belorussian Front by units of the 5th Air Defense Corps and the 320th Fighter Division, and in the zone of the 1st Ukrainian Front--by units of the 10th Air Defense Corps and the 310th Fighter Division.⁷

The effectiveness of the air defense provided for troops forcing water barriers depended to a significant degree upon the correct organization and reliable functioning of the system for controlling the combat operations of air defense personnel and weapons. The successes achieved in the massing of air defense personnel and weapons during the third period, as well as the enlistment of antiaircraft divisions of the Supreme High Command's reserve for the mission of covering the forces of the fronts, made it necessary to centralize control. The immediate responsibility for controlling the air defense weapons was assigned to the deputy artillery commanders for air defense of the fronts (armies) and the formation artillery commanders. They had at their disposal antiaircraft artillery groups made up of attached and organic antiaircraft artillery operating in the same area and performing the same mission. Control of the antiaircraft units and subunits while repelling enemy air raids was exercised by the corresponding commanders from their command or observation posts.

Centralized control was extensively combined with autonomous operations by the units and subunits, especially when repelling enemy air strikes. In the Berlin Operation, for example, the defense of crossings on the Oder was broken down into the following sectors for greater flexibility of fire control: 1st zone--Kustrin, 2nd--Geritz, 3rd--Lebus, 4th--Frankfurt, and 5th--Aurit. The commanders of anti-aircraft artillery regiments were assigned as air defense chiefs for the sectors. Because of the specific conditions in which the air defense of crossings was effected, fire control was mainly decentralized. Control was centralized for repelling night raids.

Reliable coverage for troops forcing water barriers, for crossings and bridges during the third period of the war was thus achieved with the bold massing of air defense personnel and weapons and with continuous coverage for troops advancing to the water barrier and forcing it; with the timely maneuvering of anti-aircraft artillery units and formations; with the efficient distribution of missions and the efficient organization and execution of interaction between the ground air defense weapons and the fighter aviation; and with an optimal combination of centralized and decentralized control.

FOOTNOTES

1. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1981, p 19.
2. TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense] of the USSR, fund 36, inventory 12552, file 209, sheet 30.
3. TsAMO, fund 36, inventory 12552, file 118, sheet 105.
4. Yu.A. Andersen et. al., "Protivovozdushnaya oborona Sukhoputnykh voysk" [Air Defense of the Ground Forces], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1979, p 51.
5. TsAMO, Central Air Defense Front fund, inventory 181877, file 3, sheet 35.

6. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 1, 1962, p 23.
7. VESTNIK PROTIVOVODUSHNOY OBORONY, No 2, 1984, p 88.

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